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DETECTIVE STORIES

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FEATURE STORY

The DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S SECRET

BY

CHARLES FULTON OURSLER

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Our Advance Notice

WELL, friends, we are very much pleased with the contents of the next number of this magazine, for we know in advance that you will enjoy it immensely. A better variety of detective and underworld stories never was issued in any publication. The leading novelette is the work of that forceful author Hamilton Craigie, whose former remarkable stories you already have read in this publication. It is entitled "A Man From Headquarters." As the title indicates, it is a detective story. Every sentence will interest you. The plot is good, the characters strongly individualized, and it is full of lively adventure. Do not fail to read that story under any circumstance. The second instalment of the serial "The Twenty-Dollar Plates" will be issued, and as this story grows in interest our readers will enjoy the second part more than they did the first. As it is a rather short serial, it will not tire you with its length. Among the short stories there will be a very odd detective sketch by Joe Mills called "One in Ten," a crook story; "Bitter Sweets," by Albert Chenicek, and a clever detective yarn by Harold F. Podhaski called "He Who Laughs Last." We will also have a gripping underworld story from Edgar Daniel Kramer entitled "The Black Bag," and a large number of splendid short articles. We cannot give out the titles of all the good things to appear in No. 115, for it would spoil your surprise when you get the next number. You can be assured, however, that it will contain a great deal more than we announce here, as we believe in giving our readers more than the value that they expect to get for their money.

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THE EDITOR.

The District Attorney's Secret

by

Charles F. Oursler

CHAPTER ONE

SHADOWS OF THE STORM

MISS AMANDA REID, a spinster of uncertain years, keeps a boarding house of unquestioned respectability at No. 18 Hollis Lane. The respectability of her establishment is her chief pride and boast. Over its unsullied reputation she presides with jealous care, to such an extent, indeed, that she is up at all hours of the night to find out exactly at what hour her boarders come home.

This estimable trait of Miss Reid made it possible for the police to get a start on the singular murder of Allan Hawk.

By the testimony of Miss Reid's alarm clock, which, in its way, is as virtuous as its maiden owner, Allan Hawk was alive half an hour before midnight of April 18 last. This fact the good spinster established very easily. She was lying in her bed reading, by the aid of an adjustable lamp, the latest issue of her religious newspaper, when she heard the sound of shuffling feet in the vestibule below. Miss Reid has resisted all efforts to rent her front bedroom, which she reserves for her own use, though she has been offered, by her own admission, a pretty penny for it. The vestibule and the front hall are beneath this bedroom, and she could distinctly hear the footsteps almost directly beneath her.

Following her invariable custom, Miss Reid laid aside her paper, got into a bathrobe and tiptoed out into the upper hallway. Over the banisters she peered, waiting to see which one of her boarders was coming in. But none came. After waiting perhaps five minutes, she came to the conclusion that some one had lost a key.

Mentally preparing a caustic criticism of such carelessness, she descended the stairs and opened the front door. The vestibule was empty.

Not a little puzzled, Miss Reid, unmindful of her chronic asthma, stepped into the vestibule out as far as the top step and peered up and down the street. The sidewalks appeared to be deserted. Unable to understand this, for she was entirely clear as to the sounds she had heard, she was about to go back into the house when a noise across the street arrested her attention.

The door of the Allan Hawk home was opened, casting a shaft of yellow light on the brick pavement. As she hesitated, controlled by what she herself would call a natural and

pardonable curiosity, she saw Allan Hawk himself standing in his shirt sleeves and grasping something that glistened like a revolver in his hand.

"The old devil!" Miss Reid muttered to herself. She had no love for her neighbor. He was the last of a wealthy line, a bachelor who was rumored to enjoy breaking the hearts of impressionable women. "Now what in the world is he up to?"

As this question crossed her mind Miss Reid saw Allan Hawk glance up and down Hollis Lane, as if suspicious that a lurking enemy lay concealed somewhere. Perhaps that was her imagination, but it was her impression. However, he did not linger; after that swift glance he retreated indoors, slamming the door behind him.

Her heart thumping with excitement, Miss Reid also went inside. As she climbed the stairs her brain was dizzy with the possibilities of what she had just witnessed. What was the explanation of the noises she had heard in her own vestibule? And was there any connection between them and the actions of Allan Hawk?

The religious newspaper was too tame for her excited mind as she climbed back beneath her coverlet. Over and over she rehearsed what she had seen and heard, until a full hour had passed, and she was called to the window by a fresh development.

The sound of voices coming at a distance, but filled with violence and threat, had reached her acute ears.

Raising the window, she peered across the darkened street, and as the sound of the wrangling continued, she felt certain it came from the home of Allan Hawk. Hugging her kimono about her shoulders, for the night was cold, she continued to stare and to listen, and what she then saw became subsequently of supreme importance to the police.

A light suddenly appeared at the lower front windows of the house across the street, and silhouetted against the illuminated curtain were two figures. One of the windows contained a small ventilator. One was a man, the other was a girl. The hands of the man were uplifted, and moving in quick circles, as if in desperation, the girl was shaking clenched fists at the bulky form of the man.

What puzzled Miss Reid most was the identity of these shadows. The girl she had no means of knowing. But she did not know the man either. Allan Hawk was lithe, tall and graceful. This was the silhouette of a short, stout man.

Suddenly the long, impending downpour of a spring thunderstorm broke with vicious violence. Across the heavens crackled squirming bolts of fire; the sky re-echoed with ponderous explosions of thunder, and the streets were flooded with the rain.

But Miss Amanda Reid never did mind a little water, having been brought up in the Baptist faith. She remained where she was, a little nervous about the lightning, but far more curious about what was going to happen.

Suddenly, in a death-like lull in the storm, a shot rang out.

Almost simultaneously the lights at the house were extinguished, blotting out the rectangular squares of window lights. From the corner, at the other end of Hollis avenue, came the sound of running feet, and presently a man, panting in his haste, came swishing along the rain-soaked pavements. He was wearing evening clothes drenched through, and his tall silk hat was back on his head, giving him an intoxicated appearance.

But his shout to Miss Reid instantly established his sobriety.

"Did you hear that shot?" he called breathlessly, and as she nodded a vigorous affirmative he added: "Where did it seem to come from?"

Miss Reid extended a lean right arm, upon which the rain beat pitilessly, and pointed to the opposite side of the lane.

"No. 23 is the house," she cried in her shrill voice, raised to its highest pitch to prevail against the thunder. "It's in Allan Hawk's place. I guess you know Allan Hawk. Well, just about an hour ago I seen him with a——"

But the stranger had not tarried to hear. Wading through the sloppy streets, he reached the other side just as several other men, scantily clad but protected by umbrellas, came scurrying out of near-by doorways. Windows were going up in all directions. The neighborhood had been aroused by the shot and Miss Reid's shrill conversation.

The stranger mounted the steps with an air of authority.

"I am District Attorney Haughton," he said. "I would like you all to come with me. There may be trouble; there generally is when some one shoots!"

Saying this, he rang the doorbell. Repeated ringings, however, supplemented with much banging on the doorway, awakened no response. The house was silent and dark.

At the command of the district attorney three of them threw themselves against the door, and finally battered their way in.

After considerable floundering about they came upon a baffling and ghastly mystery.

Allan Hawk was found in his library seated in an easy-chair, a book in his hand and a bullet hole in his head.

The lamp by which he had apparently been reading was dark.

An immediate investigation, under the command of District Attorney Haughton, disclosed certain supplementary facts which vastly complicated the problem.

Every window and every door in the house was barred and locked—*from the inside.*

Discounting the possibility of a secret passage, or some equally absurd supposition, it appeared impossible for any one to get out of the house after the shot was fired.

Yet the house was empty.

Moreover, the weapon was missing.

This was the problem that faced the police as a result of the murder of Allan Hawk. It was the problem which Robert Haughton, the newly elected district attorney, set himself relentlessly to solve.

But before he had been on the case twenty-four hours he was forced to ask himself this amazing question:

"Do I want to find the truth about this case—or do I not?"

CHAPTER TWO

BEHIND this almost treasonable question, addressed to his innermost self, lay certain extraordinary findings which Haughton had come upon.

At first he attacked the problem with an emotion not unrelated to pleasure. For the dead man he was able to muster no sympathy whatever. Allan Hawk was a rotter. He was an offensive character in the mind of any right-thinking man. His murder was a crime, and Haughton was determined that his murderer should be apprehended and sent to the chair, but that did not imply that he felt any sympathy in the matter.

Though he came to the case tired out—he had been given a testimonial dinner by the bar association of the state and was walking home when he heard the shot—the appeal to his imagination which the mystery presented made him forget his fatigue. All his faculties were alert, and he instantly assumed personal charge of the case.

All through the rest of the night, while the uniformed men, the plain-clothes men, the coroner, the reporters and the rest came and went, he followed through his own methods of inquiry, which he had long sought an opportunity to test. While Haughton had a healthy respect for all the methods of detecting, and knew that fingerprints and other slight clues often led to arrests, he placed his chief reliance upon the application of common sense.

But the circumstances in the murder of Allan Hawk gave his common sense a severe jolt.

With that energy which had always distinguished him, Haughton covered an extraordinary amount of ground within the few hours that intervened between the firing of the shot and dawn. He had examined the entire premises with thoroughness, seeking for clues. He had talked with neighbors, not only to the right and the left of the Hawk mansion, but also several others near by, including the willing and even garrulous Miss Amanda Reid, who had seen things while peering out of her window.

From Miss Reid the most valuable testimony had come.

She, and she alone, had been watching the house. No one else but the boarding-house keeper had seen those phantom shadows on the illuminated blind. Her story of hearing some one in her vestibule only a short time before might have some significance, Haughton figured, and he noted it down. He also was deeply interested in her report that just before

the first crash of the thunder she had heard the angry voices from the Hawk home.

Haughton was more bewildered than ever after his talk with Miss Reid. What she had seen and heard added enormous complications to the problem.

By her evidence there were at least two other people, a girl and a short, stout man, in the Hawk home, only a few moments before the fatal shot. Where had they gone? As Haughton looked at all the windows with their fastenings shut, as he came to the doors and found them locked with keys on the inside, the puzzle became more and more baffling.

The crowded circumstances—the shadows on the curtain, and then the shot, and then, immediately after that, the arrival of the district attorney and the neighbors—seemed to preclude any means of successful escape. Yet as easily as if they were but puppets of some master magician, the short, stout man and the girl, whose excited gestures had been silhouetted against the blind in moving shadows, had completely disappeared.

Though all his faculties were alert, District Attorney Haughton continued his quest through the dark hours of the early morning with a head that pounded and thumped with pain. This was his own fault, and he felt bitterly repentant. He was a sworn defender of the law, and should have been the last to break it. Moreover, he was constitutionally unfit to enjoy the pleasure that comes from mild liquors. Through some peculiar twist in his make-up his head swam and he grew dizzy at the slightest drop of wine. He had assured his fiancée, Miss Barbara Glenville, that he would never take even a little drink again, and until this particular night he had remained loyal to that promise.

But at the testimonial dinner which had been given him by the bar association one of his chums from the Yale law school had insisted on toasting him in an old-fashioned high-ball, and Haughton hadn't had the heart to refuse.

The result was that he now had an aching head as well as a bedeviling mystery to keep him from his sleep. It was, however, perhaps fortunate, he reasoned to himself as he continued his investigation, for he had set out to walk to his home in order to clear his overwrought brain, and thus he had stumbled into the Hawk murder mystery. Being on the ground was likely to prove an invaluable advantage when all the singular circumstances of the case were considered.

Nevertheless, he reflected, as he sat down before the dead man's desk and began shuffling his private papers, he was a coward not to have kept his promise to such a sweet and trusting girl as Barbara Glenville.

Though he had reserved the examination of Hawk's papers to the last, Haughton was looking to them with great hope for some clue which would lead to the detection of the criminal. Hawk's career was notorious. He had practically dissipated the large fortune which he had inherited, and there were ugly rumors that he practiced blackmail on wealthy women with whom he had been intimate, using his knowledge of their past to extort blood money on pain of sending old letters to their husbands.

"This desk should point to the guilty man," reflected the district attorney to himself, "and yet there are perhaps enough motives in here for a hundred such murders. More than one man or woman had cause to hate Allan Hawk. And more than one man or woman might have had the courage to kill him. Still, we will have a look!"

As it turned out, his guess was correct.

The blood of the young man grew hot with anger as he glanced through the letters which lay in the desk of the murdered Allan Hawk. They showed so clearly the manner of man that Allan Hawk had been—a great, hairy spider of a man, whose long, clutching fingers reached out to crush his victims.

"Nevertheless," muttered Haughton, "the guilty man has got to be punished. Two wrongs never made a right yet. Perhaps the state ought to give a medal to the man or woman who killed Allan Hawk, but this isn't a matter of perhaps. My job is to put the murderer in the electric chair—without fear or favor, man or woman—and I am going to do just that, so help me God!"

Thus smothering his genuine feelings and reaffirming inwardly his loyalty to his duty, he reached for another letter. As he did so his eye fell across the salmon-covered desk blotter. Except for five lines of blotted writing,

it was virgin of stains. From this he surmised that the blotter had only recently been inserted in the pad. Perhaps he might be able to translate that message; perhaps it might have been the very last that Hawk had written before his murder; perhaps——

District Attorney Haughton glanced around. He was alone in the little study which opened off the main living-room, in which Allan Hawk had been slain. Outside there was a subdued clamor of the many voices of men. He rose and carried the blotter over to a panel mirror.

In the reflection which the glass threw back to his astonished eyes he could read that final message clearly and distinctly. He nearly toppled over in dismay as he read:

"DEAR BARBARA:—Unless you pay me ten thousand dollars before to-morrow night I shall tell Haughton what I know about you. Yes, this is blackmail. I dare you to have me arrested. ALLAN HAWK."

It was then that the young district attorney, standing with the big blotter in his hand like a man turned to stone, put to himself that treasonable question:

"Do I want to find the truth about this case —or do I not?"

CHAPTER THREE

"IF THAT CAME OUT——"

"BARBARA!"

Mrs. Glenville's rich contralto floated down the long corridor of the second floor of the Glenville home in the exclusive suburb of Dunlea.

"Yes, mother!" called Barbara, coming to the door of her room. "Did you want to speak with me?"

"I did," replied Mrs. Glenville, and her daughter noticed that her voice was unusually grave.

Barbara hurried down the corridor, her youthful figure, clad in a simple white dress, moving as free as a young spirit of spring through the hallway shadows. Barbara Glenville was not what a musical comedy director would call stunning. Her beauty was of the quiet kind, in which the charm and grace of character is reflected in features not doll-like or regular. She was golden-haired, with confiding blue eyes, innocent and tender and completely feminine. What we call a "modern woman" wouldn't have known what to do with Barbara.

Her mother was like her, though taller, more statuesque, more firmly molded, and with a dignity that was only assumed after she was elected a director in the Woman's Club of the county. Beneath this artless disguise Mrs. Glenville was the old-fashioned type of mother, and just now Barbara saw instantly that she was distressed.

"Have you, by any chance, seen the morning papers, dearest?" asked Mrs. Glenville.

"No, mother!"

"There is something terrible in them. I don't know how to tell you, and yet you will have to know. It's about—*him!*"

"Who, mother? Not Bob?"

"No, not Mr. Haughton, Barbara, though he will be concerned in it officially, I fear!"

"Mother, can't you see your manner is alarming me? What has happened? Tell me, please!"

"Some one shot and killed Allan Hawk last night," disclosed Mrs. Glenville in an awed tone.

Barbara put her hand to her mouth as she regarded her mother with startled, frightened eyes. Her body swayed, and the old lady half rose from her chair, fearing that the shock might cause her daughter to faint. But Barbara motioned her back, conquering her weakness by sheer will-force.

"Who—who did it?" she gasped.

"How should I know? The police don't know," snapped Mrs. Glenville, venting her perturbation by allowing herself to be irritated. "Mr. Haughton found him; he broke into the house with some neighbors!"

"Oh!" cried Barbara. "I—I—I wish I could be sorry for him!"

"I don't see why we should be sorry for him," retorted Mrs. Glenville with increasing asperity. "He did enough to cast a shadow over this household. And that is the one thing that is worrying me about it, Barbara. Do

you suppose there is any chance of that ugly scandal coming out?"

"Why? Why should it?" demanded Barbara, her alarm increasing.

"Won't they rake into his past life? Won't they find out all they can about him, so that they can find out who killed him? I am only a woman, and I don't know much about those things, but that's only common sense. Why, your dear Bob will be the one who will have to do it. He's the new district attorney, and this will be his opportunity to prove what he can do."

Barbara sank into a chair and buried her face in her shaking little hands as she resigned herself to tears.

"Oh, that would be terrible!" she sobbed.

"Terrible!" repeated her mother. "I guess it would be terrible. Mr. Haughton would certainly never marry *you* if that *came* out. And not one of us would want to hold up our heads or look a neighbor in the face again."

Barbara was about to speak; the look on her face might have told her mother, had the old lady noticed, that she had something of tremendous importance to confide, but the words were never uttered.

A knock on the door had interrupted.

"Mr. Haughton to see Miss Barbara," announced the butler solemnly.

Mother and daughter darted significant glances across the room—glances that said volumes.

"Run and fix yourself!" whispered Mrs. Glenville excitedly. "He mustn't see you crying like this!"

Barbara rushed out of the room as Mrs. Glenville vented a majestic sigh. By that exhalation she seemed to remove from within her heart all traces of the recent conversation. When she faced the butler she was smiling graciously.

"Show Mr. Haughton in," she said.

CHAPTER FOUR

A SINGULAR SUSPICION

WHEN Bob Haughton entered the drawing-room of Mrs. Glenville, a stranger could have detected that his manner was unusual.

His eyes were bloodshot from the headache which the forbidden liquor had given him, and the long grilling work he had done on the case through the night. But there was added trouble in his demeanor. His eyes held a wild and wounded look, which he was striving desperately to conceal.

"Why, Mr. Haughton!" exclaimed Mrs. Glenville graciously. "You look all tired out. And, goodness, you are wearing your evening clothes!"

"I haven't been home," he explained huskily. "I have been up all night on a case. Where's Barbara?"

"She will be here presently," Mrs. Glenville promised, her voice soothing. "Sit down. You look tired out."

She seemed almost on the point of calling him Bob, a thing Barbara had tried to get her to do, but from some perverse streak the old lady just wouldn't bring herself to get that familiar until after they were married and Bob was actually her son-in-law.

"May one ask what the case was?" asked Mrs. Glenville quietly but craftily. "Or perhaps you don't want to talk about your work after being up all night!"

"No. I don't mind that," he answered absently. "It's the Allan Hawk case. I sort of blundered into it on my way home from a party last night."

He paused and rose to his feet as Barbara came into the room. No one would have suspected that her eyes had recently been wet with tears or her throat choking with sobs. She was smiling bravely, even radiantly.

"Bob!" she exclaimed, and her voice held a world of meaning. It was as if she had instantly divined something which had not been apparent to her mother. She did not go up to him with her usual greeting of an affectionate kiss, nor did he seem surprised or disappointed.

"Good-morning, Barbara, dear," he said awkwardly. "I am sorry to come here looking like this, but I've been working all night."

"Mother," said Barbara easily, "I think Bob wants to talk just to me this morning."

"Yes, I do," added Bob frankly.

Mrs. Glenville smiled a complacent and even understanding accent. She was, however,

greatly puzzled, and she bustled out of the room to have a good cry all to herself.

"Bob!" cried Barbara accusingly when they were left alone. "You've been drinking again!"

"How did you know that?" he demanded, startled out of a reverie.

"How did I know?" she retorted, her voice stricken. "Why, Bob, you promised that it would never happen again! Don't you think I can tell that? I knew it the minute I saw you—your eyes, more than anything else, I guess. At that dinner last night—— Why, Bob, how could you after your promise?"

He spread wide his hands in a gesture of guilt admitted and repented.

"It's true," he confessed, "but I swear to you, Barbara, that it will never happen again. It was the excitement of the dinner and the old friends crowding around me, and they made me take just one glass as a toast, and I knew I shouldn't have done it, but I did, with precisely the inevitable effect. I went out of my head, I guess, saw snakes and animals and wild men, though I don't think any of them suspected it. But look here, dear girl, there's time enough for you to rip me up the back about that afterward. I am deep in a bad business right now, and that's what I have come up here about."

"Sit down, Bob!"

He sat beside her on the divan, and with his hands clasped nervously in front of him he said:

"Did you know Allan Hawk?"

"Yes, I did," she answered quickly, her voice low and worried.

"How well did you know him, Barbara?"

"Not *very* well!"

"How well?" he pursued relentlessly.

"I told you, Bob. Why do you look at me like that?"

"Were you ever in love with him?"

"Bob! Don't be absurd!"

"Were you ever in love with Allan Hawk? I want a categorical answer, Barbara."

"And I am not on the witness stand, Bob."

"Are you afraid to answer that question, yes or no?"

"No!"

"Then, for the love of God, answer it yes or no!"

"No!"

He bent forward, studying her face with cruel intentness. Something in her eyes returning his gaze with such deep and steady earnestness seemed to find their way to his distracted soul. He breathed a heavy sigh of relief.

He took her soft hand between his, and raising it to his lips, he pressed a long kiss upon it.

Then he rose, his shoulders squared, his eyes alight with a new, glad flame.

"Thank you, Barbara!" he cried. "Don't mind my strange ways. I've got a lot of thinking to do; say good-morning for me to your mother."

He stumbled out of the room and out of the house without another word.

Barbara made no effort to detain him. Instead she stood transfixed and with a tragic suspicion in her eyes as she glared blankly at the door through which he had gone.

"Mother!" she screamed as she heard the door slam after him. "Mother! Mother!"

"What is it, dear? What is it?" cried Mrs. Glenville as she came hurrying down the corridor.

"Mother!" exclaimed Barbara, her voice hard and choked, her fists clenched. "I know who killed Allan Hawk!"

"Who?" gasped Mrs. Glenville.

"Bob! Bob did it! And he did it for me!"

"Impossible! Impossible!" cried Mrs. Glenville.

"No! No! No! It's the truth. I am certain it is the truth. Bob was drunk last night. And somehow he must have found out that I got a letter—a blackmailing letter—from that scoundrel yesterday, and he did it. I know he did it, mother. I don't know how, but I know he did it."

CHAPTER FIVE

WHAT WOULD ANY MAN DO?

IT was unfortunate for the peace of mind of Bob Haughton that Amanda Reid was of a curious disposition and that she had an exceedingly retentive memory.

In his examination of her the district attor-

ney had led her to be as precise as possible in all that she told him. He had urged her to tell him as best she could what the shadows on the blind of the Allan Hawk home had looked like.

One detail which she had mentioned, and of which he had taken small note at the time, now rose up with all the force of a monster to accuse the girl that he loved.

She had said that the sleeves of the dress which the girl wore had dangling fringes from the elbows; she could notice that plainly, could the gimlet-eyed old Miss Reid, as the girl moved her hands; she had seen the trembling, exaggerated shadows of the tassels.

Now there were many girls who wore tassels fringent from their elbows.

One of them was Barbara Glenville.

However, Bob resolutely declined to give in to such a suspicion. Barbara had assured him that she did not love, and had never loved, Allan Hawk. True, he had not asked her if she had had any relations with him of any other nature. The great, monstrous fear that had possessed him had been allayed by the frankness with which she had answered his question. He felt that he was able to appraise her character sufficiently, that he could trust her denial implicitly.

But the circumstance of that note which he had deciphered from the blotter, coupled with Miss Reid's description of the silhouette on the window blind and the damning detail of the tassels on the sleeves, still disturbed him, for all his resolution that it shouldn't.

These meditations filled his mind later in the morning when he was called to the telephone to receive a long-distance message.

"This is the governor!" sounded a crisp voice in his ear.

"Good-morning, Governor Bramson!" replied Bob.

"I understand you are busy on this murder case," snapped the governor. "I hope you will devote all your energies to that matter, Mr. Haughton. For a variety of reasons that is highly important. Highly so. This crime wave is making the people restless. We must stop it. We cannot afford to let this crime go unpunished. I am going to count on you."

There was a moment's pause while Bob Haughton battled with his conscience.

"I will do my best, governor, to find the guilty man," he promised, and two receivers at opposite ends of the state clicked back on their receivers.

He had given his promise, and he meant to keep it. As he had been talking with the governor the thought had eased his mind of how ridiculous, how utterly absurd, it was to suspect Barbara of murder. What if there were peculiar circumstances? The idea of connecting that gentle girl with such a crime was innately preposterous and impossible.

This conviction grew as he went back to the case. Reports were coming quickly to his desk. Some were connected with the Hawk case, others dealt with matters of much less importance. The coroner had rendered his opinion, as had the two surgeons who had examined the body. A .38 bullet had pierced the brain of Allan Hawk, and death had been instantaneous.

There was still no trace of the weapon. There was still no information regarding the escape of the short, stout man and the girl, whose shadows Miss Reid said she saw on the blind. These were mysteries which must be explained if the murderer was to be caught, and yet Bob Haughton could not suggest even a reasonable hypothesis for the puzzle.

The doors and windows had been barred from the inside. How, then, could those two shadows have gotten away? This question recurred again and again to his mind, and left him as baffled as he had been when he first discovery those inexplicable circumstances.

The arrival of one of his detectives with a report was a welcome interruption.

This young man, Perkins by name, was anxious to distinguish himself, and he now approached the district attorney with a smile of triumph, like a schoolboy who has worked out a difficult sum and expects a pat on the head from his teacher.

"You remember, Mr. Haughton," he said briskly, "that you asked me to talk with every person living in Hollis Lane, to try and get more information?"

"What did you find out?" asked Bob.

"I didn't find out anything from any of them except one, a Mrs. Hilda Miller, a young married woman with a colicky baby that is keeping her up all hours of the night. She had heated the baby's hot-water bag, and just

succeeded in getting it to sleep the other night, and as she climbed back into the bed she happened to notice the clock. It was not yet midnight. She was just dropping back to sleep, she says, when she heard a noise outside—the chugg and purr of an automobile, and then she heard a man and a woman talking in great excitement. She got to the window and looked out. It was a big gray touring car——"

Perkins was rushing on with his story, and did not notice that a sharp quiver of the eyelids attacked the district attorney when a big gray car was mentioned.

"——and it was parked right across the street from the Allan Hawk home," raced on Perkins, proud of what he had unearthed. "The man and the girl got out and rang the front doorbell of the Hawk home. They had a long talk with Allan Hawk, and then they came back and got into the machine, with Hawk standing in the doorway, barking abuse after them."

"We've got to look into this," muttered Bob uneasily.

"Yes, sir. But that isn't all I have found out. I've got the number of the car's license. Mrs. Miller noticed it, and she's a woman with some valuable memory, I'll say."

"Well! What was the number!" shouted Bob savagely.

"It was A-1717," replied Perkins, taken aback by the violence of his chief when he had expected only commendation. "I haven't looked that up in the book yet to see who owns it; I wanted to get that information to you right off, but I see the book over there in the case, and I'll look it right up now and see——"

"Never mind!" yelled Bob, pounding on the desk with his fist until the glass top threatened to smash. "I'll look it up myself. I'm much obliged to you. Now get out!"

"Yes, Mr. Haughton," replied the detective with dignity and departed.

He left District Attorney Haughton at his desk, his chin in his hand, brooding darkly.

The young chief made no effort to look up the number which Perkins had given him.

He knew who owned the car licensed as A-1717.

It was the big gray car which Mrs. Glenville had given Barbara on her last birthday.

CHAPTER SIX

BARBARA'S DARING EXPERIMENT

EVERY one who knew Barbara Glenville would have agreed with Bob's avowal to himself that such a crime would have been impossible for her. Barbara did not give the impression of strength; she was softly clinging and womanly and sweet.

Yet she was not too weak to attempt a daring deed when confronted with the necessity.

Her mother had scouted the idea that Bob had killed Allan Hawk. She rejected the idea as mere hysterical fancy and sent Barbara to her room with a bottle of smelling salts and a novel. Which was dear Mrs. Glenville's way of meeting an emergency.

Barbara had followed her mother's advice, to the extent of retiring to her room. But there she dispensed both with the smelling salts and the book. She sat down to reason and to consider.

All morning she remained there reflecting until the shrill voices of the newsboys shouting noon extras about the Allan Hawk murder rose to her windows. She called a servant and sent for the paper.

She was anxious to learn all that was being published about the case, but about one particular point she felt morbidly, almost frantically, curious.

A swift perusal of the story confirmed her suspicions. The one detail that she had feared was there. Allan Hawk had been killed by a bullet shot from a .38 calibre revolver.

She herself had given Bob just such a weapon.

Of course the city was full of such revolvers, but she felt that this detail was, nevertheless, important. Bob's manner during the interview that morning had convinced her that he suspected she knew more of Allan Hawk than she had told him. Which was true. She had no means of knowing that he had obtained that information after the murder. She believed he had known it for some time before. And she felt that Bob had considered that motive enough to kill Hawk.

When Bob had been elected district attorney she had become very nervous about his

safety. He would be brought into daily contact with criminals; it was his job to send them to the penitentiary, even to the electric chair. There would be many who would want revenge on him because he performed his duty. She had bought him a revolver, and insisted that he carry it.

Now she believed that her lover had killed her enemy with the revolver she had purchased.

The suspicion was agonizing; her nerves were trembling like the strings of a harp smitten by a brutal hand. Such gentle natures as Barbara's when suffering often do things that in milder moments would seem incredible. Barbara now resolved to do an incredible thing.

In company with her mother she had twice or three times taken tea at Bob's rooms. He lived alone in a small apartment, several blocks from her own home. The janitor there knew Barbara and knew also that she was to marry him. Perhaps he might not think is peculiar if she called there and asked permission to go into the apartment alone.

Perhaps. It was a big perhaps, a tremendous perhaps. Barbara realized how peculiar such a request might appear if the janitor were at all suspicious. To a person more sophisticated the project might have appeared altogether impossible. Only Barbara's lack of worldly knowledge made it appear in any sense feasible.

But once the idea got into her head it would not get out. She would go to Bob's rooms; he must have gone home to change his evening clothes, and perhaps she might find the revolver there.

If she found one chamber empty——

Barbara shuddered at the possibility.

For the moment this reflection held up her determination to go to Bob's apartment at once. It had suddenly become useless. If Bob *had* killed Allan Hawk he would not have left such an incriminating piece of evidence available. He would have cleaned and reloaded the weapon.

But if he had done that there might be traces of his efforts. The very fact that he had cleaned the weapon would be almost as significant as if she found the chamber unloaded.

More than ever Barbara felt that she should find out what she could. A surge of desire flooded through her; the desire to end her anxieties, her doubts, her suspicions. If Bob had killed Allan Hawk she still loved him. He was a murderer, but he had killed for her!

But she must know!

Two minutes later she had slipped into coat and hat and hurried, unobserved, out of the house. A walk of less than fifteen minutes brought her to the door of the apartment house, where she found the janitor lolling over a newspaper as he squatted at the telephone board.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Hennessy," she said brightly. He colored at her condescension and rose sheepishly. "Do you remember me?"

"I do that," he assured her heartily. "You're the lady our new district attorney is going to git for his wife, the lucky dog him. And who could be after forgetting Miss Glenville now?"

She dimpled at him demurely.

"I came here to ask your help," she confessed frankly. "And I am afraid you will think terribly of me."

"Niver! Niver! Niver!" protested Hennessy earnestly.

"You see, I am planning a surprise for Mr. Haughton, and I don't want him to know until to-morrow that I had anything to do with it. It's just a girl's idea, Mr. Hennessy; I am sure you can understand *that*."

"I shure can!" he chuckled.

"So I want to get up into his apartment without his knowing anything about it. And I just know you will think——"

"Shure, and is that all?" gasped Hennessy. "B'gosh, I thought maybe you wanted me to steal an elephant for you, or something hard maybe. Wait till I git me pass-key."

Thus, thanks to the impressionable Hennessy, Barbara soon found herself alone in Bob's apartment. She shook her head, in true Eve-like disapproval, at the spectacle of his evening clothes tossed over a chair in sprawling disarray. Evidently Bob had changed to his business clothes in precipitate haste.

Feeling a bit guilty, but sustained nevertheless by the extraordinary reason for her act, she approached the chair and lifted his trousers. They were heavy, dragged down by weight at the rear.

Her trembling hand located the revolver, and swiftly she released it from its leather case. Her heart was beating a terrific tattoo as she broke it and exposed the end of the chamber. With an effort she dislodged the shells and let them fall into her palm.

Among the gleaming bullets which she held was one empty cartridge shell!

As the terrific implications of this discovery dazed her brain she gasped aloud as of one suddenly bereft of the capacity to breathe.

At that very moment the door behind her opened silently.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY IS SURPRISED

IN the two hours following his discovery that Barbara's car had been at the scene of the murder, just near the time that it was committed, Bob Haughton had worked with an energy that literally astonished his associates.

First he had fought a battle with himself and reached a definite conclusion of what he ought to do.

He decided that if he found Barbara Glenville guilty of Allan Hawk's murder, she would never be arrested for the crime. He would destroy the evidence if necessary and fly with her out of the country. He would violate his most solemn duty to protect the girl that he loved. For his love for Barbara transcended every other thing in life to him.

With this resolve came an equally determined decision that he would prosecute the search to the final clue, to follow every source relentlessly and discover the truth. If Barbara were guilty he would find it out. Whatever he might do to exculpate her later, at least he would leave himself no longer in doubt. The suspense was too unnerving. He would keep up the search, as if she were in no wise involved, until the fact was clear.

But he would keep his clues to himself until he was sure.

Accordingly he left his office—he had had nothing to eat since the dinner on the preceding evening, and he wanted nothing—and went back to the house to continue his search of the dead man's effects.

Of course his assistants had already been helping in this search, working with plain-clothes men from headquarters, but on his arrival Bob assumed full authority, having announced in the beginning that he would take personal charge of the case, and after going over the results that had already been achieved he had the others leave him alone in the house.

In the hurly-burly that had followed the discovery of the crime he had overlooked one essential possibility, and now he breathed a sigh of relief that it had not led to disaster. That was the possibility that some letters damaging to Barbara might be in the papers of Allan Hawk. What else could he assume, considering that last threatening note which Hawk had addressed to Barbara? He shuddered to think what might have followed if one of the other operatives had found any such letters.

Before settling himself for the search Bob went to the telephone and called a garage number. When Philips, the driver of Barbara's car, answered on the wire, Bob shot a question at him which brought a pang to his own heart by its very utterance:

"Philips, where were you at midnight last night?"

"Who is this?" retorted Philips.

"This is District Attorney Haughton."

"I was home with my folks, Mr. Bob."

"Was the car out last night?"

"Yes, sir. They told me at the garage it was. Miss Glenville and her father went out riding late last night after a dance."

"Oh! Good-by and thanks, Philips. Don't say anything about this conversation; understand?"

"Yes, sir."

Bob had feared just such a disclosure, yet he had resolved to follow every clue and to learn the truth much as he dreaded it. Mr. Glenville was a short, stout man. It must have been he and Barbara who had visited Allan Hawk the night before.

Perhaps Mr. Glenville had killed Allan Hawk!

In its way that was as hard to conceive as to imagine that Barbara was guilty. Mr. Glenville was such a mild-mannered, gentle

little man. Yet why had he brought his daughter to Allan Hawk's home at such an hour?

Buzzing through his head these questions whirled as Bob renewed his search for Allan Hawk's papers. For more than an hour Bob continued the search, refusing to look at anything except the handwriting, seeking for letters which Barbara herself had written.

But he found none!

Finally satisfied that there were no such papers, and feeling very much relieved at that, Bob now decided to take a new course. He would go to his home, where he would have absolute privacy, and make a few telephone calls before he again went to see Barbara with some questions which he was resolved to put to her.

As he was about to leave the library where Allan Hawk had been murdered, his eye fell on the chair where the dead man was found, and he noticed something small and gleaming hidden in the folds of the velour cushion. He stopped and seized it. It was the broken link of a cuff button.

The discovery thrilled him.

This was a clue, and a relieving clue. It was a cuff link, or at least half a cuff link—a clue that pointed not to the girl he loved, but to a man. Perhaps there had been a struggle in which the man's cuff link had been broken. If he could find the other half of that cuff link, what might he not discover?

For the next three-quarters of an hour Bob repeated a search which had carried him several times all through the premises. But again he was doomed to disappointment. There was no trace of the missing cuff link.

Nevertheless, as he tucked the little bit of gold into his vest pocket, he felt immeasurably encouraged. This was a new angle, a new start, and it might lead him completely away from the involved circles in which he had been moving since he first began to fear that Barbara was implicated.

As he reached the entrance of his own apartment house he found Hennessy standing in the doorway, smoking a fragrant clay pipe. On seeing Bob he blushed and appeared confused.

"Helloa, Hennessy," greeted Bob briefly. "I want to get upstairs quick!"

"Oh, you can't do that!" protested Hennessy, very much in a mental stew. Barbara was still upstairs, and he had given her his word that Bob shouldn't know about her being there and spoil the surprise.

"Why can't I go upstairs?" demanded Bob.

"It's agin the rules," said Hennessy. "That is to say—that is—the elevator's broken down. It ain't fixed again yet."

"Well, damn it, I can walk," replied Bob, and shoving the embarrassed Hennessy aside, he strode rapidly up the stairs. His apartment was on the third floor.

Hennessy stared blankly after him for a moment, then dashed to the telephone. He plugged in a cord and pressed a black button furiously.

CHAPTER EIGHT

WHO DID IT?

WHEN Bob Haughton opened his door with a key he stood on the threshold, a very astonished man.

His sweetheart, who he suspected was a murderess, was standing in the centre of his living-room.

Her face was white as milk, and her lips were quivering. Her eyes were wet and her breast was heaving, as if she were laboring under intense excitement.

"Barbara!" he exclaimed, his voice throaty with astonishment. "What is God's name——"

"Come in and close the door!" she pleaded, and the tremor of her voice pierced his heart like a blade. He swiftly shut the door behind him and rushed up to her. She sank softly into his arms and sobbed unrestrainedly against his shoulder.

"Oh, Bob!" she cried. "I have something dreadful to say to you!"

His heart dropped like a pound of lead at her words. Had she come here to confess to him, leave a note for him perhaps, before committing suicide? Thank God he was here in time to prevent anything like that.

"You can tell me anything, dear," he assured her, smoothing back her hair as he led her to a chair. He drew up another beside it.

"Tell me when you can," he said simply, holding her hands tightly between his own.

She looked up at him strangely, daubing with a lacy handkerchief at her eyes.

"Have you—have you found anything?" she asked. "I mean in the Allan Hawk case. Any clues?"

"Yes!" he answered, and drew out the bit of gold. "I found this bit of broken cuff link at the very scene of the crime. If I could find the other half of it and who it belonged to——"

She gave a little frightened moan and sank back, sobbing without restraint.

Deeply puzzled at this, Bob tried his best to soothe her, and finally she became quiet enough to talk with him.

"Bob," she asked him, "have they found that weapon?"

"No!" he soothed her. He was about to assure her that she need have no fears, that he knew and understood and that he would protect her against any consequences. It was when his lips were shaping these very utterances that she suddenly blasted him out of all poise by an astonishing charge:

"Bob," she said tensely, "I know who killed Allan Hawk. That's why I came here when I had no right to. I looked at your pistol. One cartridge was exploded, Bob! And it was a .38. The papers say Hawk was killed with a thirty-eight, you know! And I know you think there was something wrong between Allan Hawk and myself! Well, there wasn't, Bob! But I know you thought so, and you wouldn't come to me and ask! And now you found that cuff link, broken. Well, it's *your* cuff link! I know because I gave you the set. Allan, you killed that man! Now, don't try to deceive me; let's plan how you and I can run away together, where they'll never, never find us, and I'll love you until we're both old, dear Bob; don't you see? I found out, but I love you just the same. Don't you understand?"

He looked at her in bewildered silence; then he caught her and kissed her.

"God bless your sweet little heart!" he cried. "No other girl could be as wonderful as you. But, Barbara——"

"Bob?"

"We won't have to do anything like that. Because, you see, I didn't kill Allan Hawk!"

"You mean it?"

She sobbed like a baby as he explained to her his complete innocence of the crime, how he had been walking home from the dinner, heard the shot, which, together with the rain, had completely sobered him, and how from that time forward he had been delving in the darkest depths of suspicion.

"And now," he said gently, "I am going to ask you to be very brave and tell me a few things. I am going to astonish you by telling you that I feared you were the one who had killed Allan Hawk!"

"Me!"

"Yes. And I was going to take you away to some place in safety. But now I know you cannot be guilty, or you would not have suspected me. But I want you to answer my questions."

"I'll tell you—anything."

Holding her hand and often kissing it, Bob then related what Miss Amanda Reid had testified; what her neighbor Mrs. Miller had seen of the big gray car, and what Philips, the chauffeur, had told him.

"Now, if you and your father were not concerned in the crime, how did you manage, at all events, to get out of the house when all the doors and windows were barred?" he asked.

Barbara looked genuinely puzzled.

"We were never in the house," she averred.

"But, Barbara, Miss Reid saw the shadows on the blind. You must have been in there!"

"No. We never went in the house. We merely stood on the steps and talked with Mr. Hawk."

Here Bob felt as if he were butting his head up against a stone wall. How could such conflicting stories be reconciled? Then suddenly he saw the explication as surely as if he had been present and witnessed it.

"I know!" he exclaimed. "Your car was turned sideward in the lane, ready for turning. You were standing on those steps, and the headlights of the car were illuminating the windows. After Hawk went inside you and your father stood in front of the car talking, and your shadows were thrown on the blind from the street; you were not inside the house at all!"

For a moment he was consoled by the unravelment of this baffling element of the mystery.

"Why did you go there last night with your father?" asked Bob suddenly.

Barbara colored violently.

"Mr. Hawk knew something about our family that is disgraceful," she admitted, her voice very low. "I should have told you, Bob, and would have done so before we were married. But mother kept insisting that you wouldn't understand, and she forbade me to say anything about it. But Hawk was a blackmailer, and he threatened to tell you himself if I didn't get him money. I showed the letter to dad, and he took me there last night to reason with him. He drove us away with profane abuse, and we decided we would tell you and take our chances with you, rather than pay him blackmail!"

"I think that was a wise decision," commented Bob. "Now tell me what it was."

Barbara was plainly trying to choke back rising tears.

"It is about my brother," she explained. "He is only my half-brother; he is my father's son by his first marriage. And he is a demented lad from being struck on the head while a child. He has murderous tendencies sometimes. Finally, when he was eighteen years old, he killed an old cobbler one day because he wouldn't fix his boots. This was all before I was born. They committed him to an asylum for life, and Allan Hawk was the chief witness against him. That is all, only that I am the only one who seems to have any influence with poor Dick at all, and twice a month I go to see him and take him chewing-gum, because that is the only pleasure he seems to find in life. But mother feels it is a disgrace for one to be connected directly as we are with a lunatic and a murderer, and that is why she made me keep silent. I suppose Allan Hawk had the same idea; he knew my father well in former years and knew this whole story. And he threatened to tell you if I didn't pay."

"The blackguard!" exclaimed Bob vehemently. "As if that would have mattered to me! I feel sorry for poor Dick just because you do. And I'd like to help him if I could. As soon as this case is over you and I will go to see him together and take his chewing-gum. Perhaps he will like me because you like me, dearest. But first I have got to find out who killed that man! It's my job, and I am going to do it!"

As he spoke the door leading to the bedroom was flung back with sudden violence. Into the room stalked a huge man with long, hairy arms, the sleeves rolled up. He wore no coat, and his clothes were torn and tattered. His face was covered with a thick, wiry beard, and his eyes glittered as if he were ravenous.

"I know who killed Allan Hawk!" he growled.

"My God!" cried Bob. "I'm seeing things again!"

"Dick!" cried Barbara, "why did you come out?"

Bob saw the revolver on the desk, and seized it, ready to shoot down the intruder, but Barbara flung herself upon him, screaming:

"Don't shoot! Don't shoot! That's my poor brother Dick!"

CHAPTER NINE

WHY THE TRUTH NEVER CAME OUT

BOB did not seize the revolver. Instead he stared at Dick Glenville in silenced amazement. The poor half-wit was frowning as if possessed with a determination to do something good for once in his life.

"I know who killed Allan Hawk," he repeated sullenly.

"Did you kill him, Dick?" asked Bob kindly.

"No! I would have, though. He's the fellow that swore my life away. He was the main witness when I was tried eighteen years ago. I never forgot that. And I broke out of asylum last night just to kill him. I come down here to kill him; I was going to break open his head with these here two bare hands of mine. But I didn't kill him."

"Who did?" asked Bob.

"You did!" was the madman's astonishing reply.

For a moment there was utter quiet in the room. Bob and Barbara stared at Dick Glenville, too shaken to reply. At length Bob faltered a denial.

"I didn't kill him, Dick," he said. "You're mistaken!"

"Yes, you did!" repeated Dick. "I was hiding in a doorway there, and then an old woman came out and frightened me away. I was trying to figure out how I could get in at Hawk. That's what I was there for. And after a while it looked like it was going to storm. I was hiding in some bushes and you come along. You was drunk. You was singing to yourself. And I came out of the bushes and you jumped back. You thought I was a ghost or something. You didn't think I was real!"

A terrible look had suddenly crossed Bob Haughton's face.

"I remember now!" he cried in anguish. "It all comes back to me when I look at you. I was drunk, but I thought some monster was after me. Did I shoot you?"

"No. You shot at me. The bullet went right by my head. But we was right in front of Hawk's house, and the bullet cut right through a ventilator on the window. It went through, and I guess it didn't stop until it got to that fellow's head. And that was where it belonged."

The ventilator! Bob remembered. He had seen it—an iron affair cut into little holes and built under the window-sill. The bullet must have gone directly through one of those holes without interference by any cross-section and lodged in Hawk's brain.

Bob was the guilty man after all!

In a daze he listened as Dick explained how he had hidden in the park all night and then loitered around Barbara's home, hoping to see her.

"I knew they'd get me," he added, "but I wanted to see her before they sent me back. I didn't care, anyhow, if they did send me back. The man I was after was dead!"

The mystery of Allan Hawk's murder has never been cleared up until the publication here of the facts.

Bob went straight to the governor and laid the facts before him with his resignation. But it happened that the governor was a man of practical and common-sense mind. He wouldn't accept the resignation. The one point he wanted to know about was the cuff link, and Bob explained that that must have dropped there when he first found the body.

On the insistence of the governor, in conference with the police, it was agreed that the death of Allan Hawk was an accident and that no good would be served by a prosecution.

Thus the case never was cleared up.

But Bob Haughton redeemed himself in the brilliant administration he brought to the conduct of the district attorney's office. Nor has he ever taken a drink since that night of the dinner.

His wife—his very beautiful wife, Barbara—has no worries on that score now. She says she would trust her husband anywhere, and Bob says she is right about that. In fact, he says she is right about everything.

Send us a one-cent stamp to cover postage, and we will mail you a copy of "Moving Picture Stories."

SPEED OF JACKRABBITS

JACKRABBITS fleeing from pursuit attain a speed of fifty miles an hour for the first mile, Colorado Springs motorcycle club officials reported at the conclusion of a cross-country chase in which the rabbit was run down at the end of five miles. In the second mile the rabbit made a forty-mile speed, and in the last three miles slowed down to thirty-five miles an hour. In their headlong dash over the prairie after the rabbit, the eleven motorcyclists in the party hurdled ditches and other obstructions at breakneck speed. There were no casualties or accidents. When the rabbit fell exhausted he was picked up, and when he had rested was set free and scampered away.

A Burnt Offering

by

Mrs Harry Pugh Smith

"ALL men are boobs," announced Jane, the chief's pretty and efficient stenographer. "They can't one of them see an inch beyond his nose. Women! Women are natural detectives! Think of woman's intuition!"

The other girls in the office cheered. Jane was a born leader. The feminine element of the office force never questioned her authority.

Jane flaunted the morning paper before their eyes almost hypnotically.

"The police say this, the coroner says that," she quoted derisively. "I say they are all boobs. Any woman, even I, could beat the whole works solving a mystery."

Something in the faces of her constituency arrested Jane's peroration. She followed the course of their horror-struck eyes and perceived at her very elbow, smiling down at her rather grimly, the chief of detectives.

For a moment no sound broke the breathless silence. Then the chief, smiling into her flushed face—he was really very fond of Jane—remarked caustically:

"That's quite an interesting theory of yours, Miss O'Neal, woman's intuition, etc. I suppose you refer to the Kurz case. I am interested in your idea, and I am inclined to give you an opportunity to prove your contention. What do you say if I detail you upon the case?"

Jane stared straight into the chief's eyes. Through her veins coursed fiery Irish blood. There was the flash of an unsheathed dagger in her eyes as she replied:

"I'll take the case, sir."

A gasp of admiration burst from Jane's round-eyed following. The chief glared about from under bushy brows, and the office was conspicuously filled with the rattle of busy typewrietrs. So Jane was sworn in and got her instructions.

It was a warm day in June. Jane felt little waves of heat rising against her face as she waited on the corner for a car. Mechanically she unfolded the morning paper and rapidly reviewed the details of the case.

"June 18.—Coroner Bryant and the police and detective departments of the city are diligently seeking some solution for the death of William F. Kurz, whose body, clad only in shirt and trousers, was found yesterday in the rear of his pawnshop, 414 Water street.

"Pete Ash, a negro, has been arrested and is being held for investigation. Ash was seen loitering about Kurz's shop on Saturday, the last day Kurz was seen alive.

"Dr. J. H. Bryant, the coroner, after several

hours of investigation, said last night that Kurz came to his death from blows to his head, the motive being probably robbery."

"It is the theory of the police that Kurz fell while intoxicated and struck his head upon an iron chest in a room in the rear of the shop which he used as a bedroom. Kurz is known to have been addicted to liquor. A complete still and several bottles containing moonshine whisky were found in his place. There is some suspicion that he had been selling homebrew.

Witnesses examined yesterday by Coroner Bryant and Police Chief Davis say that Kurz was last seen alive on Saturday. He had been drinking at that time. When the old man failed to open his place of business by noon Monday the police were notified. Forcing the door, Officers Murphy and James discovered the lifeless body lying face downward on the floor.

"Chief Davis and Captain Blair spent the day on the case. The arrest of the negro, Ash, was the result.

The fact that the front and rear doors of the shop were locked weakens the murder theory.

"William Frederick Kurz was born in Prussia in 1850, but he has been a resident of this city for twenty-five years. He conducted a pawnshop and was an expert watch repairer. He is survived by an only son, who resides in New Orleans, Louisiana. The son is expecetd to arrive to-day."

Jane finished reading the article and boarded a car.

She experienced no difficulty in locating the old pawnshop. It was a dingy little place on the river front with a single musty show window crowded with the miscellaneous junk that seems to accumulate in such places. The badge which the chief had fastened under the lapel of the coat won her an entrance, and a curt note explained her new status to the two officers who were within.

"I am afraid you are too late, miss," said Officer Murphy with a friendly smile; "the case is about ended, it seems to me. We've just made an important discovery."

He led the way to a small room in the rear.

"You see," Officer Murphy explained, "me and my friend James here moved all that rubbish over there in the corner, and behind it we found the weapon that did the trick."

He held up a slender iron crowbar slightly curved at one end.

"There ain't no doubt, miss, the negro done it. Man next-door is ready to swear he saw him knocking at the old man's door about ten o'clock Saturday night, and the night watchman at the Stanhope Building saw this darky give another black man a drink out of a bottle just like one of these here," and he kicked an empty bottle upon the floor and added: "We're going to get that negro, too. Chief's got the dragnet out for him. The way I dope it out, Ash come here to buy some moonshine, thought the old man had money, and tapped him on the head."

"I believe," said Jane suddenly, "I'll see this negro."

She went to the police sation and found him huddled in a corner of his cell. He was a small yellow negro in such a state of terror that he was almost sick. Jane called to him softly through the bars, but he did not stir.

"Pete," she called again, "wake up! You must listen to me. I am a friend. Perhaps I can help you."

The little negro shivered, his eyes twitched feebly, but he did not answer.

"I must talk to you," Jane insisted.

For a long time he crouched sullenly in the corner, refusing to answer, but at length he began to whimper dismally:

"Missy, I ain't done nothing! Honest to God, I ain't killed no white man! Doan let 'em get me!"

He began to wail in an eerie, hopeless way that chilled Jane's blood.

"I can save you, Pete," she urged, "if you will only answer my questions and tell me the truth."

The negro peered into her face, and with the insight granted to children and primitive people sensed her sincerity.

"Did you go to old Kurz's shop Saturday night?" she demanded.

"Yas'm, missy, but 'fore God, I never killed him!" wailed Pete.

"Did you buy some whisky from him?" pressed the girl.

"Yas'm, I bought a pint, but I never killed him. I never killed him!"

"You must tell me all about it," insisted Jane firmly.

"I didn't go inside, honest, missy, I didn't." Pete was clinging to the bars. "I jest knocked at the door like I always done, and he opened it a little crack, and I hands him the money, and he slips me the bottle. Then I beats it on down the alley."

"You handed him the money through the door," prompted Jane.

"Yas'm, I give him a five-dollar bill. I won it that evening shooting craps. When I won it I marked it. I tuck a pin and pricked the letter "P" in the corner, and I told them other niggers I had done marked that bill for mine, and I didn't believe the nigger lived who could fade it away from me. If you white folks'll just look, yu'll find that bill round there somewhere. I never robbed him; no, ma'am, I never robbed no man."

Jane walked slowly back to the old pawnshop. Something in the negro's story had convinced her. She did not believe Pete had killed Kurz.

The scene of the murder was deserted save for Officer Murphy, who cheerfully granted Jane permission to rummage around. It was a dingy, dusty place. The dirt of ages seemed to have settled upon the rubbish which crowded and cluttered the narrow shelves and overflowed everywhere about the small shop. The little bedroom was dingier and more crowded, if possible, than the shop. An hour's search revealed nothing illuminating. No money was found and no trace of a bill, either marked or unmarked, could Jane discover.

At length hot and a bit discouraged, Jane dropped down upon a chair beside the narrow iron cot. Above the bed hung a small calendar. Jane eyed it without curiosity. It was an ordinary, everyday calendar in every detail except—— Jane sprang up and examined it more closely. There was a heavy circle drawn in red ink around the date, June 15th! That was the very day old Kurz was murdered!

Jane ran excitedly up to the policeman and quizzed him.

"Mark the date on a calendar? No, we ain't touched no calendar, miss," Officer Murphy was positive.

Jane hung the calendar back in its place. Why had Kurz or some one else marked that particular date in red ink? Was it only a coincidence, or had it a real bearing on the case?

"Here's the keys to the iron chest over there on the floor," vouchsafed the friendly Murphy; "there's nothing in it but a bunch of rubbish, but you might like to look through it. I'm off to lunch."

Jane knelt before the chest, and it creaked dismally as it opened. It contained a pile of rubbish, old letters and papers. Many of them in German script, which she could not read, were piled in hopeless confusion. At the very bottom of the chest she came to something that wrung a startled cry from her lips. In a neat pile carefully tied together lay a number of calendars. The girl lifted them out. They dated back twenty-five years. Not one was missing, and on each was heavily circled in red ink the date June 15th!

A noise at the front startled Jane. Hurriedly replacing the contents, she locked the old chest and sprang to her feet. Some one was approaching the small rear room. A moment later Jane stared into the face of a young man. He was quite pale. Something, call it woman's intuition if you will, told Jane who he was.

"Mr. Kurz's son?" she asked.

The young man nodded without a word, and Jane held out her hand.

"I am Jane O'Neal, a sort of a detective. The chief has assigned me to—to—this case."

"I have just arrived," the young man was saying wearily. "I have been to the morgue to —to—see my father. I am ready to help in any way I can."

He listened without comment while Jane imparted what meager information she possessed.

"I can show you where he kept his money," he said when she had finished. "If he wasn't robbed it is still there."

He stepped to the wall beside his father's bed and pushed upward upon the heavy oak paneling. Suddenly the boards shifted beneath his fingers. A panel slid up, disclosing a tiny secret closet about a foot deep. From it young Kurz lifted a small tin box.

Jane bent over it eagerly. Opened, it disclosed a neat stack of paper money, some loose cash, and a few gold coins. Jane examined

the greenbacks. On top carefully folded lay a five-dollar bill, and in the corner was roughly pricked the letter "P." So far Pete's story was verified.

"My father had very few friends or even acquaintances," William Kurz informed her, flushing painfully. "He was rather peculiar. He only knew old Pop Jones. He's got a peanut and popcorn stand over yonder on the corner. I guess he knew him as well as any. I think he could give you more information than any one else."

Officer Murphy returned at this minute and took young Kurz aside. Left to herself, Jane replaced the bill in its hiding-place and set out to lunch. She glanced curiously at the old man who stood on the corner beside a shiny popcorn and peanut roaster. He had a heavy mop of gray hair and watery blue eyes that peered out pathetically upon the world.

From the policeman on the corner Jane gained some information.

"Old Pop Jones?" he said. "Yes, I know him. He's been there on that corner ever since I was a kid. Good old soul, but he ain't long for this world. Got heart trouble or something. Liable to go at any moment. Ain't been right since he lost his boy during the war. Fine young fellow, Jimmie Jones. He was on his way to France. Transport was blown up by one of them d——, I beg your pardon, miss, one of them German submarines. Poor old Pop ain't been the same since. He's had a grave all fixed up at the National Cemetery just like the boy was in it, tombstone and everything. Poor old Pop spends most of his spare time out there sodding it and planting flowers on it and talking to himself."

Under pretext of buying a sack of popcorn Jane stopped an hour later at old Pop Jones's stand. He peered into her face with his dim eyes and smiled feebly.

"I wonder, Mr. Jones," she began, "if you can give me a little information?"

He made a desperate effort to focus his wavering eyes upon her face.

"I dunno, miss; anything I can do I'll gladly do for ye, but I ain't been real well since my son——" His eyes shifted, and a nervous trembling seized upon his limbs.

Jane forced his wandering attention to return.

"Can you tell me anything about old Kurz across the street?" she asked.

The shaky old body straightened curiously. The nervous trembling subsided, and for a moment the man faced her with an intelligent, rational look in his faded eyes. It was a look of savage fury.

In a frantic effort to catch this fleeting glimpse into his crumbling mind, Jane continued:

"Can you tell me of any one who visited him, or was at all familiar with him?"

But the gleam of intelligence was gone as quickly as it had come. Old Pop Jones began to moan and whimper:

"Oh, my son, my son. Have you seen his grave in the cemetery?"

"No," answered Jane, "but I'll do so today."

He clutched at his side and fell back.

Jane stared in speechless horror. An old woman, from a delicatessen shop that adjoined the old man's stand, bustled out.

"Never mind, dearie," she said cheerily; "run on. It's his heart. He has these spells often now. I know just what to do."

Jane hurried away. She found young William Kurz at the shop when she returned. He nodded absently when she related her lack of success with Pop Jones. Jane was still intent upon the calendars she had discovered. In some way, inexplicable even to herself, she felt that in the red circles around the significant date lay the key to her puzzle.

"Mr. Kurz," she asked abruptly, "why did your father always mark the date June 15th upon his calendars?"

Had a bomb exploded at his feet William Kurz could not have looked more startled. The blood receded from his face, leaving it ghastly white. Then a painful flush swept to the very roots of his hair. He hesitated; then with his eyes bent upon the floor he stammered:

"I was in hopes that it would not be neceessary to bring this all out. I—I—hate to speak of it." He drew a long breath, straightened his shoulders, and finally plunged steadily on. "As you probably know, my father was born in Germany. He was always strongly pro-German. It broke my mother's heart," he sighed. "She was an American. He married her soon after he came to this country. He

never forgave me when I joined the American army, but it was my mother's dying wish. He made his will and cut me off without a cent. I am sure he has never changed it. He has not spoken to me since I signed up."

Again he paused as if every nerve in his body shrank from the painful task.

"When the Kaiser was crowned June 15, 1888, my father was still in the old country. He swore allegiance to the German Emperor at that time, and never forswore that allegiance. Every year on June 15th he renewed his oath. He had a life-size portrait of the Kaiser and a German flag. How my mother used to weep to see him stand before that damnable picture and kiss that flag! God, how I hated them! They ruined my father's life and broke my mother's heart!"

Thoughts too bitter for words struggled in the young man's breast.

"The devilish things are here somewhere!" he cried, starting up. But a diligent search of the shop revealed no trace of either the portrait or the flag.

Jane was impressed when old Jones asked if she had seen his son's grave. She learned its location and, impelled by either curiosity or intuition, she went to see it. On the mound she found the remnants of a bonfire. With her suspicions aroused she gathered some of the charred remains in a pile of newspaper and carried them home.

Jane was at her desk at the usual time the next morning. The chief grinned when he caught sight of her trim figure in its accustomed place. He pushed the buzzer button.

"Send Miss O'Neal to me," he directed the man who responded.

There was a little flutter of apprehensive sympathy as Jane entered what was popularly known as the "Lion's Den."

"Well, Miss O'Neal," said the chief, leaning back comfortably in his chair and regarding Jane with a quizzical smile, "woman's intuition arrived somewhat too tardily upon the scene in the recent case to be of much service, didn't it?"

Jane smiled good-naturedly and seated herself across the desk from her chief.

"Do you really believe, Chief," she asked, "that you and your men have captured the murderer of William Kurz?"

The chief stared at her in genuine surprise.

"My dear young lady," he said patiently, "we have the negro in jail, also another negro who shared the moonshine with him. We have the deposition of a reputable witness who saw this negro, Ash, at old Kurz's door the night he was murdered. What more do you want? He killed Kurz and robbed him."

Jane laughed provokingly.

The chief stared at her nonplused. His choler was rapidly getting the better of his none too placid temper.

Suddenly Jane leaned forward.

"Give me free rein, and I'll produce the murderer of William Kurz within the hour," she said quietly.

The chief snorted.

"I took your dare yesterday," Jane went on, settling back in her chair with a provocative smile; "are you going to refuse mine to-day?"

Chief Davis slammed his fist down on the desk.

"Go as far as you like," he growled.

"Then summon Officers Murphy and James," said Jane rapidly.

The chief barked his orders into the desk phone. Jane met the two officers at the door and spoke to them briskly in an undertone. When the two men had gone she sank into her seat again.

"Now, mind you, chief," she said, "I am relying solely upon woman's intuition. I may be wrong. I have no real evidence, but—well, we shall see."

The chief grunted sourly and slumped down into his chair. It was a quarter of an hour before the door opened. After a discreet knock Officer James entered with William Kurz.

"Well," snapped the chief.

Jane said nothing, but motioned the two men to one side. Almost immediately afterward Officer Murphy entered with old Pop Jones, who was shaking and trembling. His dim eyes wandered vacantly from one face to another. Jane rose slowly and approached the shaky old figure.

"Pop Jones!" she spoke very distinctly, attempting to hold the wavering eyes with her own. The old man stared at her and whimpered softly.

Jane drew from her bosom a small bundle.

She unwrapped the articles it contained, and held them before the old man's face. Slowly the bleared eyes grew fixed, the trembling ceased, the old man straightened himself, and stared with eyes grown suddenly rational at the objects she held in her hands.

Charred, blackened, burned almost beyond recognition, Jane held in her hands the fragments of an oil painting and a silken flag.

"Where did you find them?" cried William Kurz, starting forward. "My father's portrait of the Kaiser and his German flag!"

At his exclamation old Pop Jones raised his head as at the call of a bugle. He snatched the charred relics from the girl's hands.

"Mine! Mine!" he screamed in a terrible voice. "Mine! I took them from his hands! See the blood drops on the flag!" He held it up. "I burned them away on Jimmie's grave!"

The old man began to moan and whimper.

"You killed Kurz!" exclaimed Jane.

He cried piteously, holding out his hands like a pleading child.

"I found him that night when I went in, kneeling before a picture of the Kaiser," whispered Jones. "He was kissing the German flag. My head caught on fire inside. I thought of my little boy, Jimmie, dead, drowned in the ocean, and I said Kurz must stop; he must not pray to that wicked man who killed my son!"

"Yes—yes!" cried Jane. "Go on!"

"And then, oh, God, Kurz told me that I killed my son myself. When I asked him what he meant he laughed. He told me he had been a German spy for twenty-five years. He boasted that he had sent information secretly to the Germans. Then," the old man's voice dropped to a whisper, "then he said he had wormed the information out of me about Jimmie's ship, and when his transport sailed Kurz sent that news to them in cipher by way of Mexico. That was how they came to sink the transport and my boy was lost!"

His voice rose to a sudden scream.

"And then, oh, God, he turned and held up his arms before that picture and laughed. I struck him! He fell on his face, the flag in his hands. I snatched it away and caught up the picture. I let myself out the front door and locked it behind me. And then I carried them to Jimmie's grave. I burned them there and I lay down on the grave and cried, and cried, and cried to Jimmie that I had revenged him!"

The old man lifted his arms to heaven as if in some infinite distance he beheld that lost son. There was a harsh rattle in his throat, red foam flecked his lips, and old Pop Jones fell in a heap at the chief's feet. No earthly tribunal should ever sit in judgment upon that passion-racked soul.

"But," asked the chief hours later, "how did you know where to look for the portrait and the flag?"

Jane laughed lightly.

"Just woman's intuition, chief; something no mere man can understand told me to look on that empty grave in the National Cemetery, and there I found them, burned but quite recognizable."

The chief sighed almost humbly.

"Keep your badge, Detective O'Neal," he said with a twinkle in his eye; "we'll issue your regular commission in the morning."

Send us a one-cent stamp to cover postage, and we will mail you a copy of "Moving Picture Stories."

TWENTY-SIX GERMAN DEATHS AN HOUR WAR TOLL

FORTY-SIX men were killed and 109 wounded on the German side during every hour the World War was raging, according to an estimate arrived at by General von Alrock, a statistician. This estimate was made from a study of official records.

Germany's losses totalled in dead 1,808,548 and in wounded 4,246,779. Men to the number of 13,000,000 were under arms during the course of the war, of whom about one in seven was killed in battle.

The officers' corps lost 53,000 men killed and 96,000 wounded. German soldier and civilian losses through death, caused directly or indirectly by the war, are estimated by General von Altrock at 12,000,000.

The Twenty-Dollar Plates

By DAVID T. BROWNE

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

JOHN THORNTON, a division chief of the United States Secret Service, was seated at his desk, his face buried in his hands, as if in deep thought. The night was stormy without.

A knock was heard at the door. Thornton quickly raised his head and glanced in that direction.

"Come in!" he shouted.

The door opened and a well-knit man of perhaps thirty-five entered. From head to foot he was soaking wet.

He quickly divested himself of his outer garments, and then with a smile faced the secret service official. The latter gasped and hastily arose from his chair.

"You, Harry!" he exclaimed.

"Headquarters sent me down to see you, Jack. Have you had any trouble with counterfeiters lately?"

Thornton tapped a pile of papers that lay upon his desk.

"They are from Washington," he remarked briefly. "And they relate to the subject you are speaking of. I was just puzzling over them when you arrived."

"The inspector will be glad to hear of that. He told me he was expecting news from the Capital and thought perhaps it might have reached you. Suppose you condense the contents of those communications for me, so that I may be thoroughly familiar with the matter."

"Well," said Thornton, lighting a fresh cigar and handing one to his visitor, "there's really not very much of importance to relate. General headquarters says that a gang of counterfeiters have been circulating a new twenty-dollar bill, which to all appearances is genuine. Only close and expert scrutiny revealed its spurious nature. The authorities are balked. There seems to be no clues whatsoever, and as the gang has been most active here in New York, they have turned the case over to me with instructions to put one of my assistants on the job. But all my force is busy on other matters."

"That is, Jack, all except yours truly. The inspector told me to find out what I could do with the case. As I know all the facts that are to be known, I should think it falls to my lot to assume the responsibility."

"I can see no objection, Harry. In fact, you are the man I had in mind as being specially suited for this task. I was just thinking of phoning you when Fate brought you in."

"Then let us run through the particulars again, and then I will get busy." The chief told the detective all he knew about the counterfeit notes."

"It is essential," said Thornton in his most earnest tone of voice, "that we gain possession of the plates from which the bills are printed. Once in our possession all will be smooth sailing. But of course there are many obstacles."

"Quite true," replied the young detective thoughtfully. "But what man has done man can undo."

"Your confidence does you credit, Harry. But come, the hour is late. You had better be going. Don't forget my instructions, and report to me if possible now and then. Remember, I will be waiting. When will I see you again?"

Harry Coleman turned and faced the official. His manner was quiet, unassuming, yet he spoke in somewhat boastful tones.

"Our next meeting, Thornton," he said, "will take place when I am in possession of those plates and when I have brought this

gang to justice. Until then, adieu." Thornton took the outstretched hand and grasped it firmly. A moment's pressure and he released it. Harry passed out into the night, leaving the secret service official in deep thought.

CHAPTER TWO

DAVILIA'S Café, well known to every crook of the underworld and closely watched by the police, was a two-story brick structure, the top floor of which was devoted to dancing and drinking. From fall of darkness until the first gray streaks in the east foretold the coming of day strains of music could be heard by any passer-by, mingled with the tones of men and laughter of women.

Davilia was a short, stocky man, whose eyes resembled those of a ferret. His reputation for cruelty was widespread. There was a wholesome fear of him which all in the vicinity shared.

To this place therefore that sultry night hurried a man. His threadbare garments indicated hard times. His bleary eyes and red nose indicated that he was a man who frequented the bar, and, lastly, the manner in which he shambled along showed that he was not desirous of meeting any one. Whenever he saw a policeman he quickly dodged into a neighboring hallway and shrank back far in the shadows until the minion of the law had passed.

Davilia was in the act of closing the basement of his place when this person hurried in. After ordering a drink and endeavoring to warm himself by the stove, he turned his pinched face on Davilia, who was eyeing him narrowly.

"Boss," he croaked in a voice that was half a whine, "the coppers almost got me. Will you help a feller?"

"What do you mean?" asked the wary Davilia; "how can I help you?"

"Will yer bunk me for the night?"

The barkeeper hesitated. The person before him was a stranger, fleeing from the law, but Davilia himself was not overzealous in upholding the law, and his sympathies went out to the unfortunate.

"What's the trouble?" he said in an interested tone; "cracking a safe?"

"You won't give me away, will yer? I don't think yer will. My old pard, Dick Higgins, told me of you. Yer know Dick?"

A soft whistle escaped Davilia. Know Dick? Why, hadn't he played cards and planned with him for years, until the arm of the law had interfered and got Dick enmeshed in its web? Know Dick? He laughed outright.

"Why, certainly I know Dick," he answered, "and there ain't nothing I wouldn't do for a friend of his. Come on, tell me your story; you kin trust me."

Reassured, the fugitive leaned closer. His eyes almost closed, his chin quivered convulsively, his very frame shook as he hoarsely whispered:

"A murder!"

Davilia, hardened as he was, momentarily shrank back from the man before him as he would from a rattlesnake.

"What!" he gasped, thinking he had not heard aright. "You did some one up?"

"Yes." The fugitive's eyes took in every detail of Davilia's countenance as he waited for him to speak.

"That's a serious thing, pard," the saloonkeeper hesitated. "If I shield you I might get into trouble with the authorities. You know they'll comb the city, and you might be detected here."

"Yer ain't goin' ter turn me out, are yer, boss?" whined the unfortunate. "Dick told me you'd help a friend of hisn any day."

"Who did you nail?" questioned Davilia somewhat anxiously; "some friend of yours?"

He thought perhaps the crime had been the outcome of a fight in a drunken brawl.

The stranger hesitated fully a minute before he answered. Finally, as if turning the matter over in his mind, he hoarsely whispered:

"One o' them fly cops from the Washington Secret Service. I——"

But Davilia had sprung to his feet. His face was livid. His body shook frightfully, and with eyes that almost popped out of their sockets he gasped:

"Man, you must have been crazy. If you've killed one of the Secret Service, you are as good as gone. The whole force is on your

heels. It would be worth my life to shelter you. No, I'm sorry; you'll have to look elsewhere."

The humble submissive look of the fugitive changed instantly to a threatening expression as the saloonkeeper made this announcement.

"Boss," he snarled, "you simply gotta protect me. Dick said you would. If you don't, so help me God, I'll give myself up, and when I'm tried I'll tell what I know about the Harrigan case. They never found the guilty party, did they?"

Davilia went livid. He seemed on the verge of a fit, and had to grasp the table to support himself.

"What do you know about that?" he ejaculated hoarsely. "What do you mean to insinuate? I didn't croak Harrigan!"

"Who accused you?" retorted the other cunningly, and Davilia realized he had placed himself in a somewhat precarious position.

"You—you implied as much. But come; I suppose I shouldn't turn you out. I'll see if I can bunk you some place. Follow me, and do so quickly. Any minute the police might break in and search for you."

He turned the light low and, with the fugitive following, led the way along a dark narrow hall. After a minute of twisting and turning down this dark passage, Davilia stopped suddenly and stooped. It was too dark for his companion to see what he was doing, but suddenly he was aware of a rasping, grinding sound. Not knowing what the saloonkeeper was doing, he was about to cry out when to his right a section of the wall swung open, revealing a brightly lit room. The sudden change from the darkness completely blinded both for a few seconds, but when they were more used to the bright light the stranger made out a medium-sized room, scantily furnished with a bed, bureau and two wooden chairs, which rested rather unevenly upon the bare floor.

"Stay here," Davilia ordered briefly, "and don't attempt to venture out until this storm blows over. What did you say your name was?"

"I didn't say," answered the new occupant of the room.

"Then what is it?" snapped Davilia, who, though vexed at the manner of the fugitive, seemed to tolerate it for some reason.

"Bull Helion," was the answer, "but my friends call me just 'Bull.'"

"Well, Bull Helion, make yourself comfortable. I got to be going."

"Say, you won't forgit my supper, will yer?" asked Helion, whose manner since he had spoken of the Harrigan case had changed completely from the submissive to the aggressive. "Yer know I gotta eat."

"I'll bring you something just as soon as—— Hullo! What's that?"

Down at the end of the hall could be heard some one pounding terrifically at the front door.

Helion's face became as white as chalk. Davilia was equally affected. The thought uppermost in the minds of both was the police. With a warning to Helion to remain as quiet as possible, and cautioning him to put out the light, he hastily pushed a button somewhere in the hall, and the section of wall which served as a door to Helion's room swung back with that same grinding, rasping sound. Then calming himself as best he could, he stole quickly to the door.

CHAPTER THREE

THE pounding continued. Evidently some one was determined to gain admittance, even if forced to arouse the whole neighborhood.

Davilia, when he reached the door, hesitated before opening it. Mentally resolving, however, to put up as brave a front as possible, he drew back the large bolt, unfastened the chain, and threw open the door.

On the threshold stood three powerfully built men, whose shining badges and blue uniforms indicated that they were police officers. Davilia's heart sank, but he managed to put on an aggressive air.

"What's the idea?" he demanded of the foremost officer. "What do you want here this time of the night?"

Before answering, the officer and his two companions pushed inside the door, and closing it with a bang pointed a threatening finger at the barkeeper.

"Davilia," he said, "we know what sort of a man you are. Your record is down at headquarters. Unfortunately, however, we have never been able to produce any evidence to convict you, and that accounts for your being a free man to-day. Now there has been a serious crime committed. A Secret Service man was shot only a few hours ago. The trail leads us here. We are not positive that the murderer is here, but we mean to find out. Will you aid us in the search, or will you compel us to use force?"

They were in deadly earnest, as Davilia could plainly see. He knew it was no time for parleying. To attempt to balk the officers would very naturally arouse their suspicions.

"Gentlemen," he said, "what you say about me is false. I have never been arrested in my life. And as to the fact that I have sheltered a murderer, why—why, it's astounding. But go ahead and search. I suppose that is the only way to convince you of your mistake."

Without more ado the three officers began a systematic search. The dance hall above was vacant, due to some repairs that were going on. The barroom was also empty now, save for Davilia and the three officers.

"Where does this hall lead to?" questioned one of the policemen, peering down the dimly lighted way suspiciously.

"A few rooms I rent out now and then," was the answer, "but they're all vacant now!"

"We better take a look," said another, who was a sergeant, and they walked down the corridor. They examined every room thoroughly, but to no avail. They did not of course notice the crack in the partition in the wall, but nevertheless Davilia's heart almost stopped beating as they brushed by it.

They were, however, satisfied that no one was in the building, and after impressing upon the saloonkeeper's mind the danger involved in harboring a criminal, they took their departure.

Davilia heaved a sigh of relief, and wiped his perspiring brow.

"Blast them," he muttered, "I wish every one would croak. I think they must have scared me out of ten years of my life. Well, it's over, and for all their sharpness they discovered nothing."

He laughed nervously.

"I'd better bring that fellow some supper," he reflected, and set about preparing it. "What can he know of this Harrigan affair? I wonder if Dick——" he checked himself and proceeded in silence.

On entering the room he found the man trembling violently. Reassuring him that all had come out right and cautioning him to keep as quiet as he possibly could, he once more took his departure, bearing the empty tray.

Helion, now that his momentary fear had passed, set to work upon the food set before him with a vim that surprised even Davilia. Far into the night the saloonkeeper sat on his bed, puzzling over the events of the night. He wondered how long he would be forced to harbor Helion. He wondered if he knew the detective that had been killed, and lastly he wondered what this stranger knew of the Harrigan case.

He peered out into the street. At first it appeared deserted. But at a second glance he discovered a policeman standing in the doorway of a house directly opposite. The reason for his being there flashed across the saloonkeeper's mind instantly. The officers had not been fully convinced that no one was hiding in the place and left one of their number to watch all who entered or left the saloon. Davilia ground his teeth with rage. For a long time he watched the silent policeman, taking care to keep out of his sight.

"But it's useless," he consoled himself; "the sharpest copper on the force will never get wise to that room. Ain't the place been raided before, and nothing ever come of it? I'm a fool to be frightened this way. Guess what I need is a little bracer."

Feeling mentally better when he took a drink, he quickly extinguished the remaining lights that flickered along the hall, and with a final warning to the fugitive he retired. All night the police officer remained stationed in the vestibule directly opposite the saloon, keeping a sharp lookout for suspicious persons. But save for the occasional late theatregoer who hurried by on his way home nothing out of the usual occurred, and when he entered the station the next morning he had nothing of importance to report.

(To be continued in our next issue.)

Witch-Finding in India

THE ordeal by water is universal among the barbarous non-Aryan tribes of Central India, from the Bheels in the west country to the wild men in the almost unexplored jungles of Bustar and the Far East, toward the Bay of Bengal. Here is a description of one water test taken a few years ago from the mouth of an expert witch-finder among the Bheels, who got into a scrape for applying it to an old woman: "A bamboo is stuck up in the middle of any piece of water. The accused is taken to it, lays hold of it, and by it descends to the bottom. In the meantime one of the villiagers shoots an arrow from his bow, and another runs to pick it up and bring it back to the place whence it was shot. If the woman is able to remain under water until this is done she is declared innocent, but if she comes up to breathe before the arrow is returned into the bowman's hand, she is a true witch and must be swung as such."

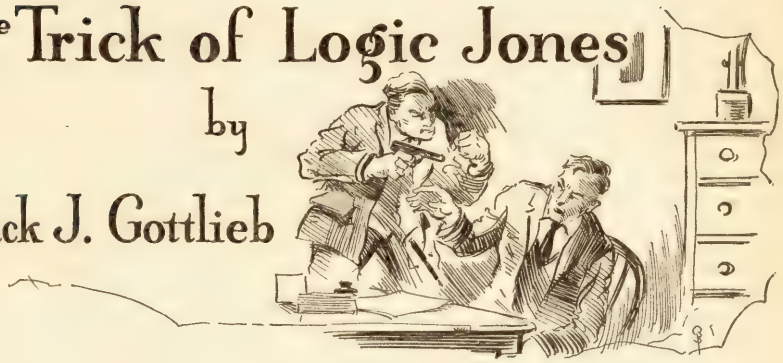
In the case from which this account is taken the woman failed in the test, and was, consequently, swung to and fro, roped up to a tree, with a bandage of red pepper on her eyes; but it is obvious that this kind of ordeal, like almost all primitive ordeals, is contrived so as to depend for its effect much upon the manner in which it is conducted, whereby the operator's favor becomes worth gaining. A skillful archer will shoot as far as he chooses. Ordeal by water is the question ordinary, which may probably be constructed as an inquiry whether the water fetich or water spirit will accept or reject the witch, whether he is on her side or against her; and this seems the best general explanation of a world-wide custom. Another ordeal is by heat, as, for instance, the picking of a coin out of burning oil. But the question extraordinary is by swinging on a sacred tree, or by flogging with switches of a particular wood. Swinging before an idol, with a hook through the muscles of the back, is the well-known rite by which a Hindu devotes himself to the god, and flogging with rods from a sacred tree manifestly adds superhuman virtue to the ordinary effect of a vigorous laying on.

A woman suspected of bringing cholera into the village was deliberately beaten to death with rods of the castor oil tree, which is excellent for purging witchcraft. It is usual, also, to knock out the front teeth of a notorious witch; the practice appears to be connected with the belief, well known in all countries, that witches assume animal shapes; for in India they are supposed occasionally to transform themselves into wild beasts—a superstition analogous to our European lycanthropy. A good many years ago there was an old man practising as a physician near Sringar, in the H[illegible]as, who was notorious as a sorcerer, insomuch that his reputation of having devoured many persons under the form of a tiger cost him most of his teeth, which were extracted by the Rajah who then held that country, so as to render him less formidable during his constant metamorphoses.

The Trick of Logic Jones

by

Jack J. Gottlieb



CHAPTER ONE

WHEN the rumor came to the ears of Detective Mike O'Brien that "Logic" Jones and Larry Harjis had had a falling out, those two young and very efficient crooks were approached by the officer and asked the reason for the breach. The police knew that in their friendship Jones and Harjis had been like Damon and Pythias—unflinchingly true to each other. Now that they were gradually drifting apart, it created more than mild surprise among their detective acquaintances. When Mike asked the cause of the trouble Larry Harjis suggested in three words a very hot destination, clamped his teeth together, and scowled at his visitor.

Logic Jones was more talkative, but, like Harjis, he refused to impart the reason for the breach when Officer O'Brien met him in Windy Dan's saloon just before prohibition went into effect.

Jones took the time to set down his mug of beer on the sloppy table, wipe his mouth with the back of an almost lily-white hand, and said in smooth tones:

"Larry and I? Why, Mike, there's been no quarrel between us that I know of. Yes, I guess we're not exactly as friendly as we used to be, but—but——" And here Jones took up the mug and drank thereof, saying no more.

With his curiosity ungratified, O'Brien grunted and went away.

One person there was, however, who knew, and the same time kept the knowledge of it to herself. That person was a young miss named Cora Kelland. Naturally pretty, she was artfully beautiful. Her hair was a glistening jet, her dimpled cheeks tinged with just the proper shade of carmine, her lips inviting. She had eyes that haunted one's memory like the days of childhood. And behind those eyes there was lodged a brain as canny and as artful as her marvelous make-up. Yes, Cora knew, knew that Jones and Harjis—the poor boobs!—had fallen for her. She knew that *this* was the reason for their alienation.

Cora Kelland lived by her wits. Every cop on the force knew her. She had a high disdain for those foolish ninnies who sweated and toiled in shops and offices, barely managing to make both ends meet. She had both eyes upon the sumptuous things of life—the things that, to her mind, made life worth living. Cora's spiritual make-up, you see, did not include scrupulousness. Why labor and live in drudgery and allow one's life-blood to ooze away for a few paltry dollars a week, when

one could have hundreds and even thousands, together with the *tang* of adventure that danger always invites—all for the wanting and the taking? Such was Cora's philosophy.

So she lived in this atmosphere of fortuity, where danger and even death lurked in the shadows that the bleak edifices of Clark street threw. The detectives knew her hangout. She was a "long-green shover" for a counterfeiter named Lounds; a distributor of the fake money he manufactured. Although the police suspected it, they never could get the goods on her. Being the sort of creature that would make one keep his eyes off the money while giving change, she was ideally suited to her unlawful task. Never yet had she been caught; never even had she struck a snag. But constituting a passage-at-arms with a government is dangerous business, and Cora knew it.

To the love pleadings of Jones and Harjis she turned a deaf ear. Secretly she hated both these young men. She abhored the herculean Larry; disliked his loose lips and the gruffness that issued from them; disliked his blond hair and stern jaw. And if she cherished an aversion to Harjis, she positively despised Jones. Why this was the case was doubtful, for Jones was handsome and educated and more or less blasé.

But a woman's a woman for a' o' that. There is no better compliment paid her than letting her know that she is attractive, that she is wanted by men who cut big figures in the crooked circle in which they moved. Cora was secretly elated, of course, even though she disliked both suitors. But as time passed, and the rivalry between Jones and Harjis waxed bitter, the secret began to pall on her. After the way of women, she commenced hoping that it would be disclosed that she was the reason for the embroglio between Logic Jones and Larry Harjis. But the two young men never showed their affections for her in public, and Cora decided that if it was to be revealed at all the matter was up to her entirely.

So, though she kept the secret to herself, it was not for long. Came the day when Lounds, her partner, a blear-eyed, pale-faced, angling crook, brought up the subject. And Cora told him all her suspicions.

"The fools!" she finished derisively. "They said they'd do anything for me, go through hell for me; but nix on the marrying stuff with either of *them!* I'm giving them the go-by for you."

Lounds was silent for a moment. He had an active brain, and he was thinking hard.

"So they said they'd go through fire and water for you, did they?" he mumbled, half to himself and partly to Cora. "Well, now, let—me—see."

"Uh-huh! That's what they said, both of them!" nodded Cora. "The poor fish!"

"Let—me—see," Lounds repeated slowly in soliloquy. A sudden idea, a gleaming inspiration sprang into his mind. He leaned over and whispered long and earnestly in Cora's ear; *whispered* as though afraid the very walls would hear and repeat the words. And Cora, listening, smiled an unscrupulous smile.

"My Gawd, Jimmy!" she breathed. "You're one clever boy! You really mean it?"

Lounds, a good counterfeiter, was also a good liar.

"Of course I mean it, little girl. I've made a pile, and it will take quite a time to spend it. And with this thing to clinch it——"

"Tell me the details, Jimmy. How're you gonna work it?"

Lounds placed a skinny forefinger in the palm of his other hand, a smirk in his weary-looking, always-wet eyes that Cora Kelland failed to see.

"Now," he said, "listen here. You know Detective Jim O'Brien."

And Cora listened.

Over in the back room of Windy Dan's rathskeller, a room replete with ill-smelling air, reposed the gigantic form of Larry Harjis. Detective O'Brien was peeping in the window at him. Harjis was in a reckless and not very pleasant mood, for he was thinking of Cora. As his gaze roved about the den his eyes rested on the heavily barred door, which now opened and admitted a wiry-framed youth.

Harjis watched him as he advanced. The youth dropped into an empty chair at Larry's table.

"Hello," he said respectfully by way of greeting. "Jimmy Lounds wants to see you."

Larry ran a hand through his hair; a hand huge and simian.

"If that bird wants to see me," he growled,

"let him come over to *me*. I ain't no nigger servant."

"He said to tell you that Cora Kelland is with him," the other explained.

Larry Harjis arose slowly. He asked gruffly:

"Well, where are they?"

The youth led him through a musty, narrow-walled corridor that was gropingly dark. Suspicious, O'Brien trailed them. Traversing a flight of creaking stairs and another slim entry, they then paused before a large oak door. The youth rapped a queer-sounding signal, the door opened, and Larry Harjis stepped into the room. The detective paused outside and crouched in a doorway to see what was about to develop.

As Larry looked about his gaze paused at the third personage in the room, and he snorted—a grim way of his that was indicative of surprise. He hadn't been led to believe that Logic Jones, once his best friend, would be there, too. Of late they had avoided each other, and now that they were, of a sudden, face to face, it created a sort of discomforting embarrassment, at least on Larry's part.

Yes, Logic Jones it was, leaning back on the hind legs of his chair, the ghost of an amused smile wreathing his pleasant countenance. Though Harjis did not yet know it, Jones had been brought to the conference without knowing that Harjis would be there. He was in reality as much surprised as was the huge Larry—inwardly, that is. Logic Jones was expert at controlling his emotions.

Jimmy Lounds broke the momentary quietness.

"Cora has told me all about it, boys, so you needn't be afraid to speak up. I've brought this little meeting about so we can settle this thing once for all. There's a deadlock, according to Cora. Is that right?"

Harjis scowled again. But Jones's smile failed to relax.

"All right, then. Before I tell you how I intend breaking this deadlock I want to make sure of one thing. You two have said nothing outside about your falling in love with Cora, but you told each other 'bout it before the break. Right?"

Neither Larry nor Logic moved or said a word. Lounds took it to mean what it did—affirmation.

"Now I won't waste any words or time," continued the counterfeiter. "Cora's been thinking it over, and she's reached a conclusion. As she likes both of you boys the same way, and is willing to hitch up with either one of you, the best way, of course, is to pick the better man. And there's only one way to find out who *is* the better man. So whoever turns a certain trick first *gets Cora!*"

Jones leaned forward ever so little. He asked sibilantly:

"What's to be done, Lounds?"

"This here: You've heard of the Madbury pearls, of course? Owned by Mrs. Tremaine on Lyndon avenue. They're worth forty thousand iron men if they're worth a cent. Now, the man who brings the pearls here, either you or Harjis, is given the privilege of making Cora a present of a wedding ring!"

A brief silence ensued. Larry Harjis stared at Lounds, a hard light in his eyes.

"Cut the comedy," he at length said pithily, with the quick flourish of a blue-lined hand. "I know 'bout them pearls, Jim. They ain't in the big house on Lyndon avenue. The Tremaines ain't there either. They've gone down South somewheres for a vacation, and their city place is closed up. They've got the pearls along with 'em, too!"

The counterfeiter laughed easily.

"You're wrong, Larry. The Madbury pearls are there in the house, all right. I know. You got your information through the newspapers when the Tremaines went away, but you listen here! I always make it a point never to believe those yellow sheets. So I made inquiries and found that it was printed just to lead the crooks off the track. They never took those pearls with them!"

Larry Harjis glanced at Cora, who sat in a corner smiling challengingly. He licked his loose lips.

"Yes, the Madbury pearls are in the house!" went on Lounds. "I'll stake everything I got on it. The reason I haven't made a try for 'em myself is because it's out of my line. Anyway, I'd bungle the job. I've kept the info to myself. I'm giving it to you scot-free, because Cora is my friend. I'm grateful to her

for many things, and I want to see her happy. Now what do you boys say?"

Harjis again looked at Cora. Something in her eyes decided him. He buttoned up his coat.

"I'll make a try for it," he snapped.

"Good," said Lounds. "And you, Jones?"

Logic Jones got to his feet deliberately. He gazed at the counterfeiter, then at Cora, and finally at the man who had once been his friend. He nodded his head.

"You might as well get ready for the marriage," he said quietly. "When I bring those pearls in there's to be no time wasted!"

When Harjis left the house Detective O'Brien was at his heels.

CHAPTER TWO

"LOGIC" JONES had not been given the cognomen undeservingly. Some artistically-inclined gang leader duly impressed by Jones's show of common sense had affixed the monicker to his name, and it had stuck ever since. Jones was verily a logician—truly a reasoner. His success as a criminal was mainly due to one quality: he used his head.

Jones knew about the Madbury pearls, the socially noted Tremaines and the Tremaines's city home. He had often passed that great house, and as often wondered whether, if the need rose, he could break into it without arousing any of the alarms and gongs with which it was wired. And the need *had* arisen.

Upon leaving Cora, Lounds and Harjis, Jones went straight to his room, where he sat down, lit a cigarette, tipped the chair so that it rested solely upon its hind legs, and thought—thought hard. It was going to be a difficult task—breaking into the Tremaine home. It was going to require, first of all, a great deal of thought. Action! To be sure action would be required, and plenty of it, but not now—later! Yes, time for that later—after he had reasoned the whole thing out.

So Jones pondered, concentrated his keen brain upon the rather singular situation. And when half an hour had passed a queer thought struck him, and a great doubt began to form in his mind. Reviewing the situation calmly, and purely from an objective viewpoint, the thing didn't look just right to him. First of all, even allowing that the Tremaine home was fairly loaded down with alarms, why should the Tremaines have left their famous pearls in the city home? Why? It was foolish and quite unnecessary, to say the least. Jones shook his head and frowned. And then, assuming that the pearls *had* been left behind, how did Lounds know of it? Again! Why did Lounds give this information for nothing when it might bring a royalty that was not to be spurned?

Jones's eyes narrowed to twin piercing pinpoints. He reviewed the space of time he had spent in that room with Lounds, the girl and Harjis an hour previous; called to memory every second of it. Why had Lounds appeared so subtly eager? And his tone of voice! Why had it quavered so when he had asked him, Jones, if he would try for the pearls? At the time he hadn't noted Lounds's vague, tensed emotion, but now——

Rising, Jones began pacing the floor. For ten minutes he did this; then he put on his cap and went out. There was a blunt firmness in his step as he crossed the threshold of Windy Dan's place which gave the lie to the careless way his hands were stuck deep in his trousers pockets and the jaunty smile that hovered about his mouth.

Windy Dan McNamara himself, heavy, florid, healthily sleek, a blackened apron adorning his front, was in the place. Logic Jones nodded a greeting, asking casually:

"Seen anything of Larry Harjis, Windy?"

McNamara raised his thick eyebrows in querulous surprise.

"No, I ain't," he made answer. "Not since half an hour ago, anyway. What's th' matter, Logic? You and Larry patch up yore little misunderstandin' already?"

Jones ignored the query.

"You don't know where he went, do you?"

"No. I—— There's Cora Kelland. Maybe——"

Of a sudden Jones bent forward.

"Don't you say a word of this to her, understand?" he hissed in the other's ear. Then he turned slowly.

Cora, who were it not for her air of deep sophistication would have seemed in the blue

murk of the place like a rose in a deserted backyard, stood in the doorway. She caught sight of Logic, smiled and nodded, then directed her look at Windy Dan.

"Where's Jimmy?" she asked.

"Lounds? Oh, he's upstairs," said McNamara. When the lithe form of the girl had disappeared from the doorway he turned inquiringly to Jones.

"What's the matter, Logic? What's——"

But Logic Jones did not pause to listen. His hands still in his pockets, he strolled leisurely to the door, at which vantage-point he glanced sharply up the narrow, uncarpeted passageway. He was barely in time to see the flitting form of Cora round the turn of the stairs farther ahead. Taking a few deliberate steps until he was out of the range of vision of those within the room, he suddenly galvanized into action.

With a nimbleness and an inaudibility that was startlingly cat-like, he moved towards the steps; began to ascend them. He crouched low as he did so; if Cora took it into her head to turn about and look down, she would see nothing but the blank bare steps and the stolid bannister. He could hear her feet going pat-pat up the stairway, and he brought his treads into rhythm with her own. And all the while his lips were set in a hard menacing line, and there was a light in his eyes that was not pleasant to see. Gone was the youthfulness from his slim figure, the cloyed surfeited air of him. Logic Jones was now a stern, bleak-faced man.

She had stopped at the third landing, and was walking swiftly along the groaning floor. Logic Jones bounded up the stairs, feline grace in his every movement, making but the slightest sound. To his ears there came a clicking noise, as of a door closing. He reached the landing; on the tips of his toes he approached first one, then the other of the doors situated periodically along the musty corridors, listening for the tone of voices. No boards groaned under his feet, as they had beneath Cora's. Logic Jones was not considered expert in his line for nothing.

A feeling of elation passed through him as, pausing and placing an adept ear against the third door, he managed to determine the voices of both Cora Kelland and Jim Lounds. Jones looked farther ahead, and noted with satisfaction a turn in the entry that afforded him immediate concealment should it become imperative. Once more, then, he bent forward. His head almost touched the beam of the door, and he strained his ears to catch every word from within.

"Not a bad room this," he heard Lounds say pithily and as though from afar off. "We were wise in not trying to write this letter in the same room we dished out that dope to Jones and Harjis an hour ago. Either one of 'em might have taken it into his head to come back, and—and——" A short, grating laugh, a single harsh note that quickened the flow of Logic's blood, followed the unfinished sentence.

"Uh-huh," acceded Cora. "You've got a head on you, Jimmy."

"And of course it would be unwise to write it on the paper Windy Dan uses," continued Lounds, speaking volubly. "We've got to look ahead, and at the same time see that we're leaving no trails behind. Anybody know downstairs that you bought this stationery?"

"No. Don't worry, Jimmy. Leave it to little Cora to play smart."

"I will that," said Lounds. There followed a brisk exchange of words, a talk anything but coy and demure, which sent a piercing, tingling sensation, a sensation of wrath, through Logic Jones's every fibre.

Steadying himself, he slowly bent down until his eye was on a line with the key-hole. A section of the room sprang into view. But the range of vision included only Lounds's left arm and a part of his torso, and Logic raised himself, listening again.

"Wouldn't be surprised if both those blokes were at Tremaines's by now," the counterfeiter was saying. "I've no doubt they can break in without rousing any gongs, but they'll have a tough time locating that safe and then trying to open it. And if they both try to get the pearls that aren't there at the same time, I'm wondering what'll happen. Now, Cora, run along for a few minutes while I buckle down to it. Unless, of course, you want to stay."

Logic Jones heard the girl say "I think I'll go," then, aware that she was about to leave the room, listened to no more. As he glided towards the turn in the corridor his

keen ear was dimly conscious of a noise that sounded very much like a kiss. From where he was he heard the door open; heard Cora trip along down the stairs as though she had not a care in the world.

And then it was that the thin set lips of Logic Jones relaxed. His eyes slowly lost their glint, and a sinister twinkle took the place of it. The pucker of his brow became a pucker no longer. A smile wreathed his features.

Fully five minutes passed before he made a move. Then, lithe as a panther, he slipped noiselessly over to the door. Another minute went by. He placed a firm hand on the knob, quietly opened the door, and as quietly stepped into the room.

Like a startled roach, Lounds swerved in his seat. But even before he had risen his face took on the color of sand. His bulging eyes stared straight at Jones, as though he were a wraith. He glared at the automatic that had leapt into Logic's tautened fingers as though from out of nowhere. The pen in his right hand clattered to the floor.

"Not a word! Not a sound!" breathed Jones, a hissing in his voice, murder in his eyes. "Keep very still, you scum! There's something you and I are going to talk about. And while we're doing so, if you make a move that I don't relish, you filthy rat! I'll kill you as I would a mosquito!"

CHAPTER THREE

THE street to the north of Lyndon avenue was narrow indeed. It was called Warner Place, and it was used almost entirely as a mode of entering the rich-wrought houses on the avenue. Ignorant that he was being shadowed by the detective, Larry Harjis paused on the corner, glanced up the street, then retraced his steps and walked up Lyndon. O'Brien followed. He passed the Tremaine home, turned the corner, and trod swiftly up Warner Place, still tracked by the detective.

He passed the rear of the Tremaine house; then, with the certainty of a man who knows exactly what he's about, slipped into a narrow lane a few houses ahead—a passage that barely admitted him. His sharp eyes pivoted into the gloom, he managed to detect the red-brick wall of a house; detect also the incline of an olive-painted tier of fire-escapes that cascaded from roof to cellar. Harjis had guessed that these fire-escapes were there; the house was one given over to bachelor apartments, and for such dwellings the law requires modes of egress other than staircases leading to the front door.

Certain he could pass the windows that punctuated the course of the fire-escapes without attracting attention to himself, Harjis began the slow ascent. He trod softly up, floor after floor, keeping to the shadows. Once he was forced to stop and flatten himself against the wall as he caught signs of life in the window below, but luckily he was not detected. He had half a mind to turn back and chuck the affair as too hazardous, but a vision of Cora urged him on.

Quite a time passed before he had reached the last landing. A ladder of iron that hung from the roof now riveted his attention. Surprisingly nimble for one of his hulking size, he drew himself up and over. Then Detective O'Brien darted from his place of concealment and flew up the fire-escape after him.

Harjis lay still for a minute, listening. Then he crept cautiously to the coping and looked down into Warner Place.

Satisfied that he had not been observed, he started crossing from roof to roof, a slow grin visiting his features. The detective sneaked after him, using the chimneys to conceal himself.

Harjis knew that no house owner, even the most strait-laced of them, would suspect that any one would try to break in via the roof; therefore it was certain that there would be no jangling alarms to greet his iniquitous entrance.

Reaching the pebble-strewn roof of the Tremaine residence, the marauder turned his attention to the scuttle. With a very efficient jimmy he managed, after a time of patient labor, to force it open. As he raised it his nostrils noted a musty odor—of lifeless air recently escaped from a house-like tomb. He peered down into a well of impenetrable darkness.

Infinitely cautious, he set his foot in the hole of the scuttle. It greeted the iron rung

of a ladder. The touch was satisfying to Harjis, and he climbed down. The scuttle shut to after him, closing off the vista of a dark-blue and studded sky.

An electric torch came into his hand, and its great yellow eye roved the room. It found the door, and Harjis moved over to it soundlessly. He opened it, passed along a carpeted corridor, and found the banisters of a stairway. He groped his way carefully down from tread to tread. Behind him the shadowy detective's huge form followed, sinister and silent.

At the foot of the stairs an almost invisible string stretched across his path. Harjis chuckled mirthfully.

"Crude stuff; blamed crude!" he muttered to himself. "Little Larry Harjis ain't been in this game for well-nigh ten years to be fooled by the likes of *that!*"

Nevertheless, after he had vaulted the string, he moved ahead with greater caution.

Though he had no way of knowing the plan of this particular house, Harjis had a long-conceived notion of the layout of rooms in rich men's homes, due to personal experience. He knew, for instance, that it was in the safe of her boudoir that madame usually kept her expensive trinkets, and that the boudoir was located on the second floor, most likely near the centre of the house. So, warily descending another flight, and avoiding contact with objects as much as possible, he reached the floor he was after. He tried two doors before he hit upon the right one, ignorant of the fact that the detective lurked only ten feet behind him.

He experienced an odd thrill of exultation as he opened the door of the boudoir and scrutinized the room with the eye of the searchlight. He had made no false step, and here he was in the innermost part of a house guarded with devilish burglar alarms that at any moment might bring the fury of hell down upon him. Verily, it did credit to his ability.

He noticed that the room was spacious, very high-ceilinged and quite sumptuous. It befitted a woman of Mrs. Tremaine's station. Larry advanced into the room, superbly careful of every step. He allowed the incandescent shaft of light to travel inquiringly about.

The safe he had been picturing in his mind was there—a wall safe, visible only by a tiny silver combination knob that sent a flash into his eyes as the electric torch encountered it. Advancing, Harry Harjis regarded it speculatively. It was of an absurdly simple make—so simple, in fact, that he felt like crying out with joy. Why, it would not take him more than twenty minutes at the most to open that toy! So Logic Jones wanted them to get ready for the marriage, did he? Well, he'd show him.

But as yet he refrained from fingering that sparkling, luring knob. How certain was he that a mere touch of it would not send a message somewhere or other and catch him like a rat in its trap? For a time he considered, then a wave of audacity surged through him. It was true that he took a chance, but the prize was well worth the risk.

He inspected the safe carefully, then, almost entirely assured, placed the flashlight in such a position that it shone full upon the safe. Feverishly he set to work, his skilled fingers turning the knob to and fro, his keen ears ever listening to the far-off fall of the tumblers. Hard and earnestly did he toil, until the sweat stood out on his forehead, until he cursed as the combination for the fiftieth time eluded him. Truly, it wasn't so easy as he'd thought.

But at length a low sigh of relief escaped him, and slowly the door came open. Panting, he caught up the flashlight and jabbed it into the maw of the safe. He peered in, glaring expectancy in his eyes.

But it was empty!

An angry hand seemed to grip the heart of Larry and squeeze it. A frenzy seized him, and suddenly careless of peril, seeing only a slowly fading vision of Cora, he jabbed both hands into the safe. But it only verified the fact that the safe was empty.

Suddenly Larry stiffened. A sound, an infinitesimal noise so slight that it almost escaped his sharp ears had come to him from the direction of the doorway. Another intruder had seized O'Brien by the throat unexpectedly and choked him into insensibility with scarcely any noise.

On the instant Harjis had snapped the light out, had glided quietly over to the tapestries he'd noticed when he had first come into the

room. But they were not pulled together; squeeze as he might against the wall, they did not altogether hide his burly frame. Harjis cursed and waited.

Of course it was Logic Jones—Jones of the winsome smile and shrewdly laughing eyes. Larry placed his searchlight in his pocket and took out his Luger automatic. Jones, eh? Get ready for the wedding, eh? Harjis felt like laughing out loud.

Five minutes passed. He wondered at and was glad of the fact that Jones had not seen fit to manipulate his searchlight. And then a thought struck him. Could it be that Jones knew of his presence? Harjis tautened. But what of it, anyway? If Jones found the safe empty he'd naturally suppose Harjis had the Madbury pearls. If Jones thought he was beaten, he'd let it go at that. Jones was a man! He would simply say that the best man had won.

Harjis sensed rather than heard the stirring of a form across the floor. Then a light illuminated the room. It was gone on the instant—a mere flash, but in that moment Harjis felt a twinge of fear. A board creaked.

And then Larry felt the touch of bare knuckles in his face.

CHAPTER FOUR

IT was not a hard blow, and he was not taken entirely unawares. Stepping out from behind the tapestries and slipping the weapon in his pocket, he lunged out with both hands. His left fist crashed against a soft barrier, and he heard an angry grunt.

Furious blows now began to rain in upon him. He was surprised at their vehemence; they were entirely different from the first thump he'd received. He began striking out with ardor. More than once he heard a cry of rage as his huge fists collided with a mobile wall of human flesh, but instead of letting up his opponent fought harder and harder. Harjis now felt the blood streaming down his face.

Never yet had he been in a like situation. Here he was, fighting a man with whom he'd once been inseparable, in a house in which they had no legal right to be. And the darkness! If only it were light!

There it was again! That flash of light that lingered but the least fraction of a second. A bitter fury welled up in Harjis, and he determined to bring the contest to an end and escape from the house before it was too late. Righting himself from a smash that had almost floored him, he reached forward, grasped the other's clothing in a vise-like grip, and let go of his right fist with all the power that was in him.

Again that flash of light, and Harjis was aware that he was in danger of losing his life. For it had revealed to him the gleam of a weapon; whether knife or pistol he did not know. Anger, kindled within him, became a ferociousness that was white-hot. He sprang forward, lunged out with his foot in a kick that carried death with it, steadied himself, and drew out the Luger from his pocket. So Logic Jones wanted this to be a fight to the finish, did he? All right! Then a fight to a finish it was!

A swinging arm now caught him flush on the point of the jaw, and he felt his senses reeling. He hesitated no longer, but leveled his automatic and fired. Then something cut into his shoulder, searing his flesh and causing him untold anguish. Again and again he fired—here, there, to every side of him. And when every chamber of his weapon was empty a dead stillness, except for the bizarre pounding at his temples, prevailed.

To get out of this damnable hole! That was his sole purpose now. Reaching in his pocket, he drew out the flashlight and turned it on, staggering towards the doorway, not even glancing at the limp form of Detective O'Brien at his feet. Out through the door, up the stairway; it didn't matter now what alarms he set going so long as he got out and away. He had closed the scuttle, but now, finding it open as the detective had left it, he gave the matter not a thought. Only to get away; to get away.

The outside world was dead with a star-lit grayness, but to Harjis it seemed alive—alive with a myriad of sparks, with moving, lunging, surging, attacking things that harassed him, even on Warner Place. It was only when he'd reached this back street that he paused. Leaning against a pole, he waited until he had

calmed down somewhat; waited until his hard and heavy breathing had become less turgid. Then he moved quickly in the direction of Windy Dan's place.

People looked at him as he hurried along, some with covert amusement, others with disdain. They thought him drunk. Well, let them think it; let them.

He took to the side streets, where there was a dearth of light and pedestrians, and half an hour later entered the rear of Windy Dan's.

The wiry-formed youth who had called him to the conference that had been the beginning of his disastrous adventure was in the place; otherwise it was deserted. Harjis, duly thankful, dropped into a chair.

"What's the matter? Been in a fight?" asked the youth.

Harjis didn't answer. The other grinned.

"You look a sight, you do! But I hate to think what the other jay looks like." A harsh chuckle. "Say, Logic Jones was here five minutes ago with Cora Kelland! He said you'd be here pretty soon, and for you to see him upstairs."

Dazedly Larry looked up. In a voice that was scarcely a whisper he asked:

"Logic Jones?"

"Uh-huh. Say, what's the matter with you? You must be sick. Yeh, upstairs; the room all the way back on the third floor."

Harjis stared at him; then, rising, went out into the musty corridor and trod up the stairs. Logic Jones! Could it be that the man he'd shot in the Tremaine home was not Jones, after all? Reaching the door of the room he had been directed to, he rapped, after a moment of hesitation. A cheery voice, the voice of Logic Jones, bade him enter.

Mind in a maze, he did so. Yes, Logic Jones it was, smiling and firm-lipped and sleek as ever, and without a blemish on his face or on his clothes. Larry's surprised gaze traveled to the other occupant of the room, and he received another shock. What was wrong with Cora? He'd never seen her like this—so pale, and frightened, and tear-eyed. Her arm was on the table, and it showed ivory-white where Logic's fingers encircled it. Harjis noted that it was not a caressing touch.

The right hand of Jones was free, and he now stretched it forward.

"Larry, you and I've been fools long enough. Here's my hand."

Larry looked at the small white hand, and compressed his lips. What he wanted was elucidation.

"Wait a minute, Logic," he said pithily. "I ain't no prophet. There's a lot I don't understand."

"There surely is," said Jones. He let go of Cora's hand, took out a cigarette and touched a match to it. "Listen to me, Larry! I'm going to explain everything. I'm going to let you know what dubs you and I've been; what kind of a rat Lounds is or was; what sort of a wench we have in the person of this Cora Kelland. And when I get through you and I are going to shake hands. We're friends; we were born to be friends; even while everybody thought us enemies we've shown our friendship."

He paused for effect, puffed at his cigarette, then went on:

"Lounds was lying when he told us the Madbury pearls were at the Tremaine house. He didn't intend either of us to get Cora, and neither did she. He wanted her for himself, but he was afraid of us. So he thought up his little plan. He tipped the police off and O'Brien was sent to catch us like mice.

"I figured the whole thing out, and caught him writing this letter to the police. I felt like murdering Lounds then and there, but a better plan suggested itself to me. I wanted to try you out; see if you'd take advantage of the man who was your rival for a fool slip of a girl. And you've come clean, Larry!

"That scene in the room of the Tremaine house—that was almost entirely my making. Lounds was there; I'd brought him with me. I knew you were in the house and O'Brien was after you. He left the scuttle and one of the doors open. And when I flashed my light on in that room I saw O'Brien. He had followed you. I choked him senseless in the hall, and then I flashed my light in on you.

"Of course you guessed it was I. You might have taken a chance of shooting at me, but you didn't. You're another sort, Larry—the *right* sort. You might have tried to kill me then and there; the shot would never have been heard on the outside.

"Remember that first jab in the face? I did

that. Then I shoved Lounds in at you, and it was he you fought. You believed it was I, and you only tried to protect yourself. I know. It was dark, but remember those flashlights.

"If Lounds is dead, so much the better. If he isn't, he's going to get a nice little stretch up the river when O'Brien comes to. And listen here; you and I and Cora are going to swear, if the bulls get suspicious, that we've been together all afternoon. The police have nothing on Cora; if Lounds isn't dead and he makes any accusations they'll include Cora, and she'll swear he's lying. Cora will oblige us; if she dares tell the truth, it'll mean a stretch for her, too. But she'll do as I say." Logic Jones paused, and his lips grew menacing.

"After it's all over, Larry, you and I will be through with her. She can go her own double-crossing way; we'll take the other path."

He stretched out his hand. Larry looked at him, turned to the trembling girl. A sinister light came into his eyes, and he frowned.

Then impulsively he gripped Logic's hand with fingers of steel, and the treacherous girl sneaked out of the room and vanished.

O'Brien was a puzzled detective when he revived and found Lounds in the room instead of Harjis. The crook was badly wounded, and the detective found a roll of counterfeit ten-dollar bills in his pocket when he searched him.

"How did you get in here?" demanded the detective. "Follow me?"

"I am not talking, O'Brien," answered the counterfeiter sullenly.

"Where is Harjis? Didn't he do this?"

"I haven't seen him. I intend to get the guy who nailed me in my own way in the future."

"Well, these phony bills and your forced entry into this house are going to get you from ten to twenty years, so you'll be a long time getting even. It must have been you who followed me in while I was trailing Harjis, and it must have been you who choked me. Do you mind explaining why you and Harjis came here?"

"You'll never find out from me. If I squeal I'd get in worse trouble."

That was all O'Brien could get out of him, so he locked the man up, and a month later Jones and Harjis in a Western mining town, where they were living honestly, read of Lounds's trial and sentence to a long term in prison.

Send us a one-cent stamp to cover postage, and we will mail you a copy of "Moving Picture Stories."

FINDS PRE-CAESARIAN ROMAN CALENDAR

ALMOST interesting discovery was made recently at Anzio, in the Roman Campagna. It was of a calendar made of plaster and much earlier than the calendar as made by Julius Cæsar in the year 46 B. C. This calendar evidently dates back to between 163 B. C. and 84 B. C., and is the only one yet found which antedates that of Julius Cæsar.

Some parts of it are missing, but the rest shows that it was based on a lunar year of 353 days divided into twelve months of 29 and 31 days, with a thirteenth month, called intercalary, of 27 days, interposed every alternate year after February. Under this system the year had an average of 366 1-2 days—that is, four days more than a solar year should have.

Inevitable confusion arose from this, and the College of Priests had the right to intervene and correct it whenever they chose by omitting the intercalary month. It was because they often did it for political reasons that Julius Cæsar decided to reform the calendar and intrusted the work to the celebrated mathematician and astronomer Sosigenes. He based his calendar on the solar year in place of the lunar, and made it one of 365 days.

The year 46 B. C. when this took effect was called the "annus confusionis" (year of confusion), because, in order to make the year 45 begin with the new sun, ninety extra days had to be inserted in the year.

The ancient calendar, unique of its kind, has just been published by the Royal Academy of the Lincei.

The Queerest of Metals

A GENTLEMAN who is posted in refining and assaying precious metals said to the writer that the principal portion of platinum—or, in fact, nearly all of it—comes from the famous mines of the Demidoff family, who have the monopoly of the production in Russia. It is all refined and made into sheets of various thicknesses, and into wire of certain commercial sizes before it comes to us; but we have frequently to cut, roll, and redraw it to new forms and sizes to meet the demands upon us. At one time it was coined in Russia, but it is no longer applied to that use. We have obtained some very good crude platinum ore from South America, and have refined it successfully, but the supply from that source is as yet very small. I am not aware that it has been found anywhere else than in Colombia, on that continent, but the explorations thus far made into the mineral resources of South America have been very meager, and it is by no means improbable that platinum may yet be discovered there in quantities rivaling the supply of Russia.

A popular error respecting platinum is that its intrinsic value is the same as that of gold. At one time it did approximate to gold in value, but never quite reached it, and is now worth only a few dollars an ounce, according to the work expended upon it in getting it into required forms and the amount of alloy it contains. The alloy used for it is iridium, which hardens it, and the more iridium it contains the more difficult it is to work.

"A distinguishing characteristic of platinum is its extreme ductility. A wire can be made from it finer than from any other metal. I have a sample in my pocket, the gauge of which is only one two-thousandth of an inch, and it is practicable to make it thinner. It has even been affirmed that platinum wire has been made so fine as to be invisible to the naked eye, but that I do not state as of my own knowledge. This wire my son made."

The speaker exhibited the sample spoken of. It looked like a tress of silky hair, and had it not been shown upon a piece of black paper could hardly have been seen. He went on:

"The draw-plates by means of which these fine wires are made are sapphires and rubies. You may fancy for yourself how extremely delicate must be the work of making holes of such exceeding smallness to accurate gauge, too, in those very hard stones. I get all my draw-plates from an old Swiss lady in New York, who makes them herself, to order. But delicate as is the work of boring the holes, there is something still more delicate in the processes that produce such fine wire as this. That something is the filing of a long point on the wire to enable the poking of the end of it through the draw-plate, so that it can be caught by the nippers.

"Imagine yourself filing a long tapering point on the end of a wire only one eighteen-hundredth of an inch in diameter in order to get it through a draw-plate that will bring it down to one two-thousandth. My son does that, without using a magnifying-glass. I cannot say positively what uses this very thin wire is put to, but something in surgery, I believe, either for fastening together portions of bone or for operations. A newly invented instrument has been described to me, which, if it does what has been affirmed, is one of the greatest and most wonderful discoveries of modern science. A very thin platinum wire loop, brought to incandescence by the current from a battery—which, though of great power, is so small that it hangs from the lapel of the operator's coat—is used instead of the knife, for excisions and certain amputations. It sears as it cuts, prevents the loss of blood, and is absolutely painless—which is the most astonishing thing about it. I am assured that a large tumor has been cut from a child in this way, and that the child laughed while the operation was being performed, and that without any anesthetic having been administered."

Trailing a Comet

by

Agnes Wright Spring

MICHAEL SWIFT, just promoted from brass buttons to the more elegant obscurity of a derby hat and civilian clothes, stood looking out of a window at police headquarters. The city where this happened shall not be named. The fruit venders on the crowded street that morning missed the hearty greeting of the man in blue; little children running by to school stopped a second and looked for the big, smiling man who called them funny names and chucked them under the chins. And a little old woman with a shawl drawn tightly over her head paused and hesitated when the policeman standing in the street did not raise his hand to halt the traffic as he always did when he spied her. She soon realized that a stern-faced stranger was wearing the uniform. Mike had been advanced to the detective bureau, and was waiting for the training class to begin.

At that moment he was apparently intent upon watching the huge trucks which rattled down the street, but in reality he saw nothing, as his attention was centered on the conversation of the two men back of him.

"Did you hear about Jimmy Briggs landing his man last night?" asked one.

"The deuce he did? That's the second big case for him. He'll have a string of merits that will stretch from here to Iceland if he keeps up at this rate," was the reply.

"Yes, he's the best detective on the force now, but how he does it all beats me! He has a monopoly on his system, too, because he always works alone, and is always too busy to get acquainted with the rest of us." Then the two detectives left the room.

The embryonic detective was excited because he knew Briggs well and had often put him on the trail of criminals who lived near his beat.

"I wonder——" he commented to himself. "I wonder if he would give me some pointers." His reverie was soon disturbed by the star man hunter himself, who entered the room whistling.

"Why, hello, Swift? What're you doing here?" he asked, going over to his desk.

"I've just joined the squad."

"Good! That's fine. We need men like you in here," the great detective commented, unlocking his desk, taking out his reports and sitting down, all within a few seconds.

"Congratulations on winning another big case," ventured the former policeman, approaching the detective's desk. "Say, I wonder if"—he hesitated—"if you would mind giving me a few pointers about the game? I want to show some of the fellows on my old beat that I can make a go of this. You must have a pretty fine system."

Briggs pushed his cap on the back of his

head, tipped his chair, frowned slightly and sized up his interviewer. Ordinarily he would have had a feeling akin to that of the stage manager towards a student of dramatic literature seeking for "experience" and would have found a feasible excuse for not bothering with him.

Then, too, he always worked alone, and never discussed his plans with any one. But he had known Swift for a long time and realized that he had a wide acquaintance in the foreign sections, plus a practical knowledge of human nature—both valuable in Briggs's estimation.

"Sure, I'll help you," he said. "Don't know much about it myself; I guess I'm just lucky. But maybe I can spill a few knowledge beans your way. Sit down."

"Thanks," and Mike pulled a chair up close to the desk.

"There isn't very much of this side-whiskered, squint-eyed, mustachio business," began the instructor. "You've got to keep your eyes and ears open. Watch people, know their work, their haunts, their weaknesses and their friends. Study their features and learn their voices. You'll get a lot of that training in the bureau, but maybe I can give you special tips."

Their conversation was interrupted, as Mike had to join his companions for the morning's instruction. If he had felt any disappointment at his friend's unromantic description of the work, he soon forgot it because this first lesson was far from mediocre, being almost spectacular. Wearing black masks and robes, the student detectives stood in a line on one side of a big, empty room, while several of the worst criminals in the prison were brought in one at a time and placed in front of a sounding board. An officer cross-questioned the prisoners and gave a summary of their crimes. The eyes behind the black masks watched the criminals sharply, studying the features and listening to the voices so that they would recognize them at some future date. No one was more intent upon the work than Michael Swift. Briggs had advised him to observe, and what Briggs said was going to be his law.

He already felt himself on the trail of a criminal, listening to voices on the other side of barred doors, or being able to recognize certain marked crooks as they slunk along through dark alleys.

Hours of study in the Rogues' Gallery and in the class for walking identification kept the new recruit busy for the first week, and he did his best to learn everything. Each night he waited eagerly for the words of instruction and sometimes of praise from Briggs.

In this week Briggs, the star sleuth who was studying the big fellow critically, finally arrived at the conclusion that here was a man who would be mighty valuable to him because he was always willing to follow instructions and seemed to hang on every word that Briggs said to him.

"How'd you like to move your cot into my room?" he asked Swift one night; "the chief said it was all O. K. with him, and that for a while I could give you extra coaching, so you could do some practical work with me. In that way we can have more time to talk together."

"Do you mean it?" Mike, elated, stuck out his hand.

In short order the transfer was made, and while the smaller man moved about the room rearranging the furniture, Swift sat on the edge of his cot beaming. Then he picked up the homicide emergency kit which the chief had given to him that morning as part of his paraphernalia, and began to examine the contents so that Briggs would not see how pleased he was at being taken in as a roommate.

"Great! Aren't they?" he said, holding up a bottle of fingerprint ink, running his fingers over the edge of a saw, trying out the flashlight and scrutinizing the jimmy. "Do all the fellows have outfits like this?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Briggs, "the jimmy that's in my set belonged to Joe Sunday. You remember he was killed last year. See, it's a peach," and he opened his kit, pulling out the prettiest piece of workmanship in the line of jimmies that Swift had ever seen. "The chief gave this to me after I wound up my first case."

Pulling a chair up to his desk, he motioned for his companion to sit down. "Now," he continued, "we'll start a real class in Briggs's statistics. You're a good scout, and I'm glad to give you any ideas I've picked up. I don't

go around airing my knowledge before the boys, because they all think that their methods are the best ever, so what's the use?" He took a small notebook out of his pocket.

"The first essential thing is to keep a diary. Every man should keep one. How's a man to prove an alibi if he doesn't know where he was? I always keep an exact account of where I am and whom I meet," he said, handing his book to Swift. "Because you often want to backtrack."

The understudy looked at the carefully written pages with their explicit notes.

"What are these queer little signs?" he asked, pointing to several odd-looking characters.

"Oh, those are to indicate that I have made special inquiries and have certain secret information as evidence which I keep in a separate book, and do not carry it with me, as I could not afford to lose it."

While Swift returned the book to him, the latter continued:

"When you spot a 'suspect,' find out whether he knows where he was at a certain time. Nine chances out of ten he can't tell you. Keep a record of your work for yourself. Always keep duplicates of your assignment reports, too." Turning to his desk, he showed Swift the copies which he had made of his Number 4 v. d. reports. "See here's a case that was given to me last summer—the Horse Shoe Inn diamond robbery. The only report I have on that is just the circumstances concerning the theft; no subsequent reports yet. I'm on the lookout all the time for clues on this, but it is one of the slickest pieces of work I've ever handled. The thief must have been a guest at the hotel and probably was a friend of the young woman who lost the jewels. I've spotted several men, but haven't been able to get the goods on any of them yet."

"How about the pawnshops for clues? The chief told us this morning that we could consult reports sent in by them and by the second-hand dealers and check them up with the lists of stolen stuff here in the office."

"Sure, we all do that. But some of the pawnbrokers don't send in full reports. If they did crooks and three balls would have to hunt another sphere or starve to death. By the way, there's a little junkshop on D street at the waterfront that's a pretty good place to find things in. Sometimes stolen stuff will show up there when we've given up ever finding it."

Briggs opened a false door in the lower part of his desk and took out a tin box, dumping the contents on the table. Bracelets, necklaces, and pins tumbled out, shining in pasty splendor beneath the artificial light.

"Here's just a lot of ten-cent stuff, which comes in mighty handy as decoy. I use it lots of times, and it works."

Mike laughed as he fingered the sparklers and thought of the store down near his old beat where all the kids spent their pennies for "joolry."

"Some glass factory!" he exclaimed. "But how do you use it?"

"Why, when you find a man you think is guilty, work off some of this stuff on him and you can generally find out whether he is a crook or not. I'll explain it all later. You can't have too many devices and schemes to catch your worms," commented the instructor. "I guess we'd better turn in now or there won't be any worms left. The early birds are thick around here."

Steady even breathing came from one cot in a few minutes, but in the other an understudy was carefully reviewing the evening's instructions: Keep a notebook and see if the other fellow has one; keep in touch with pawnshops, especially the one on D street, and have plenty of tinware to use as bait. He turned over on his side and was soon walking up a long row of notebook stairs, studded with diamonds—one for each case which he, Michael Swift, had landed under the guidance of the star detective. But the morning brought stern reality and another day of mere routine training.

Mike was getting anxious for real action and hence eagerly grasped his first opportunity. Briggs handed an address to him, saying, "If you really want to locate this fellow and see what you can get out of him, go to it. I've been watching him for some time. See if he can tell you where he was on May 1 of last year. Don't let him know what you are after. Find out, too, if he is one of those fellows who doesn't keep a record book," he said, slapping his pocket, in which his daily jottings reposed,

and then turned to the struggle with his tie as he was in a hurry to be off to the Kendrick dancing party.

"See you later," Mike called over his shoulder as he tucked the address in his pocket and hurried out of the room on his first assignment.

"I haven't been adding many merits to my name lately and there are still some big cases to close," soliloquized Briggs, surveying himself in the mirror as he drew on his gloves. "I'll have to get a hump on."

The Kendrick home was a mass of ferns, flowers, music and chatter—principally chatter. The latter was generally most useful to the detective in his work, but to-night it grated on his nerves—what could he get out of the prattle about the latest model runabout and pet dogs? At the end of an hour he was quite disgusted. He hadn't seen one person with even the slightest earmark of a criminal.

Thoroughly bored, he was trying vainly to discuss the latest opera with the girl on his left —or rather she was the one who was trying, when suddenly he caught snatches of a nearby conversation.

"Have you really been up to Lake Mignon? How splendid! Then you know all about that diamond robbery at the Horse Shoe Inn?" asked an eager feminine voice. "My cousin, James Marks, lost just lots of jewels there."

Briggs was at once alert.

"Oh, yes. I was there at the time. There was a great deal of excitement. I do not see how the fellows got away with such a haul without leaving a clue. You see——" But it was impossible to hear any more.

"Do you like the Italian opera better than the Russian?" drawled the voice at Briggs's left.

"I think I like the mignonette," he replied, straining every muscle in his right ear and slowly edging over on his chair. There was an immediate change in the weather for him. The thermometer was rising rapidly. The chatter no longer grated on his nerves; in fact, he had his ears cocked for every scrap of conversation that he could hear.

"Who is this man next to us with Katharine?" he asked, interrupting the charming operatic discourse.

"Oh, haven't you met Mr. Spinner? He's splendid! He's a distant relative of the Kendricks and has just traveled everywhere," exclaimed his companion enthusiastically. "Mrs. Kendrick had never seen him and I guess really did not know he was related to her until he came here on business a few days ago. And he is so interesting and entertaining that every one is just wild about him!"

"Hm!" was the only comment, as a pair of keen eyes surveyed the stranger from head to foot.

"You really ought to meet him," the girl suggested, evidently eager for an excuse to talk to Mr. Spinner. In a few minutes they had joined the group of which the man of the Horse Shoe Inn story was the center of attraction, a tall figure—handsome in evening dress.

"Mr. Spinner has just returned from China," announced Katherine Kendrick, turning to the detective, who was intently studying the features and the voice of the Oriental traveler.

But all unconscious of the newcomer's stare, he of the Kendrick connection was so brilliantly describing his trip into the interior of that vast land that one might think he had just edited a guide book on the subject. In conclusion he elaborated every detail of the homeward journey.

"Did you just get back?" asked Briggs, apparently intensely interested in the story of the captain's farewell dinner on board.

"Last summer," the former replied with a far-away expression as if he were still standing on deck looking out over the rolling waves. "Oh," he added suddenly, catching the sharp look in the detective's eyes, "I really did not intend to give a travelogue. Come, Miss Marks, this is our dance," and smiling at the group of interested listeners, Spinner glided away with his partner. Apparently no one except Briggs had seen the startled expression in his eyes. The orchestra was playing "Farewell to Thee."

The guests, standing in small groups in the hall laughing and calling "good-bys" to each other, waited their turn to bid the hostess "Good-night." Caught in the crowd, Briggs carefully kept within earshot of Spinner, who was at that moment speaking of the Yellowstone Park.

"We were there last summer, too," said the voice of an admiring feminine creature. "I'd love to talk to you about it again."

"Yellowstone Park, China, Horse Shoe Inn," remarked Briggs under his breath, running down the steps to his machine.

"Car for Mr. Spinner," shouted the driver of a taxi just as the bureau star slammed the door of his automobile.

Queer, isn't it, how two cars can slide along streets, dodge street cars and vehicles, and yet not lose sight of each other? Briggs was an adept at that work and the only chauffeur who he would allow to handle his car was—himself. He always insisted that he could save time by doing things alone, and driving his car was no exception to the rule.

The two machines drew up to the curb in front of a large hotel almost simultaneously and Spinner entered the building unaware of the man behind him who, ten minutes later, came out of the lobby with one more sheet added to his notebook. The hotel clerk had been in a most communicative mood.

"Traveling salesman," Jimmy commented to himself. "Hm! I think he's a little afraid of me. Eh? Here's where I give Mike some practical work until I'm ready to step in and finish this up!" He rounded the corners on two wheels, drew up in front of headquarters, then hurried off to bed.

"How's the weather over there," he said sleepily the next morning, raising up on one elbow and yawning as he pushed back the covers. "What luck last night, Mike? Did you find your man?"

Swift grunted and stretched.

"Yes. And he said he was in Pittsburgh on the first of May. Said he went to work for a big electrical plant the month before. Seemed to know pretty well what he was doing about that time," he answered unenthusiastically, trying to talk carelessly and not betray his disappointment.

"Guess he isn't the man we want," the former remarked, crawling out of bed. "But cheer up! If you want to try another one, I'm getting a lineup on a pretty good specimen named Spinner, who is stopping at the Hamilton Hotel, Room 202. Drop around there late this afternoon and find out if he knows where he was on August 23."

"All right, I will," answered the understudy, forgetting his disgust at finding his first case such a fizzle.

That night he returned to his room excited over his interview with Spinner, whom he had found most approachable. After discussing the line of goods which he carried, they had drifted into a discussion of vacation trips and the salesman had readily described the national parks which he had recently visited. Swift noticed that sometimes the narrative did not run smoothly—and what was most important of all—Spinner could not remember where he was on August 23.

But in spite of the discrepancies in the stories, the cub detective liked this new acquainance. He was frank and boyish with an attractive personality and had really seemed delighted to know Swift. Hence the latter hesitated when making his report to his instructor that night.

"He doesn't have the ear-marks of a crook," he assured Briggs. "I know he's a glib talker and doesn't always keep his stories straight, but I believe he is all right. Rather forgetful; that's all."

"Maybe so, but you always want to look under the sheep's skin in this game," and a smile flickered over the experienced man's face as he entered some notes in his book. Swift was also adding a sentence to his "Daily Doings."

A week came and went while Mike devoted all of his extra hours to interviewing persons designated by his roommate, who was busier than he had been for many days. Dozens of telegrams poured in for him at all hours of the day and night; excited voices called him over the telephone; and when he was not attending the numerous social functions being given in rapid succession he was writing furiously in his notebook.

"This'll be a great case," was all he said to Swift, as he was packing his bag one afternoon preparatory to taking a short trip after more evidence. But his companion was quite in the dark as to what the case was. And he did not know that the peculiar smile on the star's face was caused by the discovery that Spinner had talked himself into almost every country on the globe within the past year, sometimes being in India and Alaska at the

same time. In fact, he was "some" globe trotter.

The trip out of town was apparently productive of results and everything was in readiness for the big surprise when he of the already increasing reputation returned to the bureau.

"See here, cub," he said, addressing Swift, who still maintained his silence, asking no questions, "I'm just about to land a man and I need one more chain of evidence—I've got to find one of these stolen articles," and he showed Swift a list of jewels. "It's up to us to comb the pawnshops. You take one district and I'll take the other. Let's see"—he hesitated—"you'd better work the lower one, down near the water-front, as there aren't so many shops down there."

Mike was delighted that he had been assigned to the district containing the shop on D street because he well remembered what Briggs had told him about that place during their first talk.

The two set out immediately to find one of the stolen articles if possible. Mike headed straight for D street and lost no time in locating the little junkshop. As he pushed his way through a pile of miscellaneous furniture near the door he was met by a small, sharp-faced little man with squinty eyes who had come from the dark recesses of the mountain of débris.

More than half an hour was spent in careful maneuvering before Swift convinced the small owner that he was really there to buy and not to spy.

"Haven't you anything in emeralds and diamonds?" he asked. "A ring or a neck piece, perhaps?"

"I'll see. Maybe I have," and the man shuffled to the rear of the store, disappeared behind a curtain, and quickly returned carrying a small tray of miscellaneous jewelry in which reposed a pendant, the exact description of which Mike carried in his pocket. After great deliberation and bargaining, he purchased the pendant with the money Jimmy had given him and walked out of the shop.

He tried to go slowly, feeling conscious that every one on the street was watching his efforts to keep his pace down to a moderate gait. He was thankful when at last he reached the station and could run up the steps without exciting attention.

"Here," he exclaimed, all out of breath as he saw Briggs sitting at the table looking over the contents of his tin trinket box. "Here's the real thing."

"Sure enough?" beamed Jimmy, eagerly opening the package. There lay the pendant which had been stolen from Jane Marks at the Horse Shoe Inn. It was a queer design, and there could be no mistake as to its identification.

"You remember you mentioned that old shop on D street the first night I was here, so I struck straight for it. If you had taken that district you'd have found it yourself and probably a lot quicker, too," said Mike.

"I'm glad I gave you the first try at it. You must have put up 'some' talk to that old fellow, as he's mighty suspicious of cops and detectives," he said, brushing back his hair and carefully examining the pendant. "I'm all ready now to go on with this case. Great business. You're right there!"

Swift hung around the room all evening waiting for more information concerning the case that Jimmy was working. He wondered whose pendant that was. Several times questions stood at the tip of his tongue, but he decided to wait for Jimmy to speak up. But he became so engrossed with his thoughts and notebooks that he forgot all about the existence of his understudy and his promise to explain.

Across the city at that very moment Spinner's name was being whispered over the teacups as the buds of the season reviewed the contests of the week.

"Isn't he wonderful! I just love to hear him talk," was heard on every side. With a frank boyishness, Spinner had won his way into the hearts and homes of the entire circle of Kendrick friends and acquaintances. He was athletic, a good dancer, and was perfectly at ease with old or young. No other stranger had won his way so quickly into that exclusive set.

Briggs was well aware of that fact, and it delighted him because he relished having merits tacked on his name and big headlines in the newspapers. Such an exposure as he was soon to make would cause much more than a ripple

on the social pond—it would be little short of a typhoon! So he planned his campaign carefully. When he discovered that Jane Marks had issued invitations for a dancing party that week he decided that the opportune moment had arrived for his surprise act which he knew would be a thriller. Mr. Spinner had consented to remain over for the party. In fact, the event was being planned especially for that young man's pleasure. Luck always seemed to play into Jimmy Briggs's hand.

The appointed evening came with its soft lights, dreamy music, gay dresses, pretty girls flitting in and out among the palms and flowers and men smoking in the alcoves. Jimmy drifted about with first one and then another dainty partner—always keeping close to Spinner with the hope of getting a cue for his big surprise. There was a lull in the conversation at one end of the room when he distinctly heard Jane Marks speaking.

"Katherine told me you were up at the Horse Shoe Inn the night of the robbery. Isn't it strange that we should have been there at the same time and did not meet. I always have felt that I would get the jewels back some day. There was a pendant——"

Jimmy had been hoping for just such an opportunity all evening.

"You might ask Mr. Spinner more about that pendant," he interrupted with a queer laugh, turning to the couple.

"What do you mean?" flared the accused man.

"I mean just what I said," and Briggs raised his voice to attract the attention of those near by.

"Why, Mr. Briggs, you have insulted a guest!" Jane Marks was furious.

"It is about time that some one insulted him," he announced. "He is the man who stole your jewels at the Inn."

A thrill ran through the room as the dancers gathered around to listen. There was intense silence for a second, and then Spinner started to speak.

"He has that pendant in his pocket at this minute. I saw him put it there. I've been on his trail for more than two weeks, and I now place him under arrest," said the detective, pointing to the garrulous salesman.

How the pendant reached the pocket of the astounded man needs no explanation—leave that to Jimmy. It is enough to say that it was really there, as Jimmy proved to them before Miss Marks could find her voice to doubt the charge.

Gasps of surprise came from the onlookers as the pendant of emeralds and diamonds was drawn out of the victim's pocket.

"What sort of a joke is this?" he laughed nervously.

"No joke. You're guilty and I can prove it," asserted the accuser, clapping handcuffs on the absolutely thunder-struck man.

"What's this? There must be a mistake," insisted Mr. Kendrick, coming up all out of breath.

"No, sir. This man is a thief and an impostor," and Jimmy triumphantly escorted him down the steps, where the patrol machine was waiting. Spinner, utterly confused, still insisted that it must be a practical joke.

But at the end of a week he knew it was not. Thin-faced, disheveled and disheartened, he sat in a cell of the city jail trying to make himself believe that it was a nightmare. Here, just as he had attained the one ambition of his life—popularity—he had thus been rudely torn from glory.

He looked back to that day when, several years before, he had discovered that if a man wanted to be popular he had to be interesting, and that he could be if he talked about traveling. But he had never traveled and the weekly salary of a salesman did not leave much of a margin for taking jaunts around the world, so he had decided to take book journeys. He had read pamphlets, studied maps, attended lectures and moving pictures until he could make persons believe that he had really traveled. The scheme worked and the habit grew. When he discovered that the Kendricks were related to him, he made the most of his chance and won entrance into the social set of his ambition. He was getting along famously when—— Again he tried to think where he was on the night of August 23, the date of the robbery.

Oh, why had he ever remembered that newspaper story about the Horse Shoe Inn affair? How had that pendant got into his pocket? Who could help him prove an alibi? When his lawyer tried to get witnesses to testify that

he had been in certain places, they were all doubtful and said that he had told them he was on his way home from China in August. Another said that he was in the Yellowstone Park—and so it went.

"Can't these people understand that I am not a criminal?" he moaned. "Didn't they know that I just told the stories because I wanted to be popular?"

But his brain was not the only one which was doing forty-miles-an-hour revolutions. In a certain room at headquarters a big, good-natured, green detective sat smoking and thinking—chiefly thinking—with a newspaper in his hand containing an account of the new success of Detective Briggs.

"August 23," mused the reader, "the date of the robbery. And I was the one who discovered that Spinner didn't know where he was that night! And the pendant——" Here he stopped and began to wonder again as to Jimmy's methods. Was Spinner really guilty? How had Jimmy worked it all? The pendant was the one from the shop in D street. Did Jimmy always take the credit for everything? Such questions were racing through his mind as he took out his notebook and scanned its pages.

"A fine lot of records," he soliloquized. "Feb. 1. Went to talk to J. Harrison to find out where he was on May 1. Feb. 2, interviewed Spinner to see where he was on August 23. Feb. 5, went to see—— Only *five more dittos,*" he finished in disgust. He smiled when he thought of his dreams in which he had pictured himself as a great sleuth. He had imagined gunplays with robbers, handfights in dark alleys, falls through trap-doors and numerous hair-raising escapes. The business of trailing a comet hadn't made him the constellation that he had planned—the comet cast too much light.

"Briggs is taking all of the credit," he continued, "and when the case comes up he'll be the hero all right. I wonder where I'll come in?"

At first he thought of telling the chief of the bureau all about it, but changed his mind and decided to find out more about the methods which Briggs used.

"I'm tired of this understudy business. Guess I'll teach myself a few things," he muttered, stooping to pick up a small notebook which had been kicked under the edge of the desk.

Swift wanted to attend the Horse Shoe Inn case, which was scheduled for ten o'clock on a certain morning, but Jimmy, who already contemplated the new feather that would soon be waving from his cap, sent the recruit off on another case.

When the court opened, the seats were filled with richly gowned women and a number of well-dressed men, as this was one of the biggest society cases of the season.

The audience waited impatiently during the preliminaries until Spinner took the stand.

"I've been living a lot of lies, but I'm not a thief," the defendant began. "I wanted to be popular and thought if I could make people think that I had traveled they would be interested in me, so I studied maps, guide books, travel books—everything I could get hold of until I could convince persons whom I met that I had been in various places. The habit grew until I could see the places just as plainly as if I had been there. I tell you I've been living lies. I just traveled to small burgs selling my goods, but I made every one believe that I had been around the world. I read that story about the robbery in the paper and just said I was there to make my account of the trip to Lake Mignon seem real."

His narrative sounded well, but it was more amusing than convincing. His wild tales in every town through which he had been made the task of providing an alibi hopelessly confusing.

The detective's witnesses testified that Spinner had told them that he was in a dozen places in August. No one could state exactly where he was at the time of the robbery. The man himself had so muddled his brain with his fanciful trips that he could not remember where he had been on that night. Why wasn't he then at the Horse Shoe Inn?

Katherine Kendrick and Jane Marks nervously twisted their handkerchiefs and bit their lips as the lawyer for the defense made his final plea. The sympathy of the audience was plainly with the defendant in spite of the circumstantial evidence.

Who would the jury believe: a man who had been unable to prove an alibi, who had been

caught with the goods, and who had openly confessed that he had been living a life of lies; or would they credit the word of a man who had established a brilliant career as a detective, who had convictions to his credit, and who had presented a mountain of circumstantial evidence.

The case was finally closed and the twelve jurymen having been aroused from their reveries filed out of the room.

In the course of an hour the door of the jury room opened and the twelve men came back to their seats. The women leaned forward. The judge coughed and the men shifted their feet restlessly—then came absolute silence. The foreman rose and read the verdict: "*Guilty.*"

The prisoner's head sank forward, hopelessly.

Jimmy Briggs glanced over the persons in the courtroom, inwardly rejoicing that so many of the representatives from the "old families" were there. This was a crowning moment for him. He walked over to the window, jammed both hands down into his pockets, and teetered back and forth on his toes and smiled. Then he stopped and looked sharply down the street at a figure slouching along.

Who knew, maybe that figure would make a good "next victim." He made a mental review of the contents of his tin box and wondered what article would best suit the figure in the street. The tin box was the fountain-head of Jimmy's pet theory. He believed in locating "suspects," and finding out whether they could establish an alibi. Then he combed the pawnshops for stolen property to be used as circumstantial evidence. The great system was a combination of the two—the "suspect" and the stolen article—regardless of the fact that neither had been in any way connected with the other. The problem of successfully correlating the two depended upon the ingenuity of Briggs. It was this ingenuity that made him the marvel of the detective crew. But if the pawnshops failed to produce——

Jimmy was still smiling to himself when the outer door of the courtroom swung open and the big form of Micheal Swift appeared. His eyes were snapping and he was quite excited as he advanced.

"Wait a minute," he shouted to the sheriff, who was leading Spinner out of the room. The men and women stopped talking. All eyes were directed towards the newcomer. Briggs was quite composed.

"What was the verdict, your honor?" asked the excited Swift. "That man is not guilty. I can prove it."

The color left Briggs's face.

"Mike," he said, sharply approaching his understudy, "don't make a fool of yourself. This case is through."

"Maybe so, but your game is up. I found your book with the queer signs. This was 'the slickest piece of work you've handled yet,' all right. You robbed the Inn yourself and sent that pendant down to D street. That pawnshop guy's a real pal of yours. I suspected him, arrested him, and he has squealed."

"The man is crazy. Take him in charge, officer," commanded Briggs coolly.

"Crazy nothing. I'm not. I was until I quit that job of understudy. That treasure box of Briggs's has real stuff in it; they're not all paste. His jimmy did it's work well," he said, turning to the judge.

Briggs darted for a side door, realizing that he could not quiet Swift.

"Don't hurry. The doors are all blocked," announced Mike, blowing a shrill whistle, and covering Briggs with a revolver.

The courtroom was wild confusion. The judge rapped for order as a deputy sheriff leaped over a chair and seized the slickest society crook of the day—Jimmy Briggs.

"I wonder," continued Swift, looking straight at his man, "how those innocent fellows, your star cases, like doing time for your frame-ups?"

"I've wondered that myself," was all Briggs said.

Allan Pinkerton

ALLAN PINKERTON, the founder of Pinkerton's Detective Agency, died July 1, 1884, at 3:05 p. m., at his house in Chicago. He was born near Glasgow, Scotland, in August, 1819. He learned the trade of a cooper, and in early manhood was a boss cooper in Glasgow. During the Chartist excitement he attended public meetings and made some strong speeches on the Chartist side. He was charged with uttering seditious sentiments, and, learning that he was about to be arrested, embarked with his wife for Canada. The vessel was wrecked in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and all on board were landed on an island. He went first to Montreal, then to Toronto, and finally settled in Dundee, Ill., where he again took up his business as a cooper. He made barrels and tubs, which he carried to Chicago and exchanged for goods.

Allan Pinkerton's first exploit as a detective was in the discovery of a gang of counterfeiters on an island in the Fox River, a few miles above Dundee. He used to go to this island to gather hooples, and on one of his visits discovered in an abandoned camp the evidence that counterfeiters had been there. The country was sparsely settled and the place lonely. By following up clues, however, the gang of counterfeiters was discovered and punished. About this time he was frequently employed to aid the sheriff in searching for horse thieves and other outlaws. He was always willing to drop his tools and join in such a chase.

Removing to Chicago, he soon became deputy sheriff of Cook county, and was noted as a brave and successful officer. At that time Chicago had no regular police, and the sheriff and his deputies had much perilous work in the pursuit of counterfeiters, horse thieves, and other criminals, to whom Allan Pinkerton soon became a terror. He was afterward appointed the first detective in Chicago. He was an early Abolitionist and an associate of John Brown. He rendered important and enthusiastic service in the management of the Underground Railroad for the escape of fugitive slaves.

It was in 1852 that he founded the detective agency whither bears his name, and for more than thirty years he had been employed in ferreting out some of the most desperate crimes of the age. His services have been employed on many missions where the regular police were either destitute of the requisite skill or could not work to advantage. Among his exploits was the extradition of the notorious Reno brothers from Canada, who were subsequently taken from the jail at New Albany, Ind., and hanged by a mob. He was engaged in the pursuit of the notorious Jesse James and his brother and the Younger brothers. Four of Pinkerton's men were killed by the James party, and Jesse once announced his determination to kill Allan Pinkerton. This was after Pinkerton made a raid on the James home, when Mother James had her hand blown off and one of her sons was killed. Jesse remained four months in Chicago, looking for a chance to execute his threat under such circumstances that Allan should know who killed him, but he could not find the required opportunity.

One of the most famous exploits of Pinkerton's men was the tracking and exposure of the Molly Maguire bands of murderers in the mining districts of Pennsylvania. The work was attended with great risk to the detectives, who were engaged for months working in the mines, acting as members of the Mollies, and identifying the ringleaders. The result was that the Mollies were broken up and their principal leaders were hanged. Another noted piece of work was the detection of the robbers who took $40,000 from the office of the Adams Express Company in Montgomery, and the recovery of nearly all the money. In working up this case Mr. Pinkerton had eleven assistants. One was a handsome gen-

tleman, who dressed elegantly, drove fine horses, flirted with the robber's wife, and got secrets out of her at champagne suppers. It was on this job that Allan Pinkerton first introduced female detectives. He had a dashing young woman with a female companion, who took board at a hotel, and got at secrets that the male detectives could not reach. Mrs. Kate Warne was the chief female detective in this case, and she subsequently assisted Mr. Pinkerton in other detective work. In the express robbery case Maroney, the chief robber, was arrested, and confessed, and went to prison for ten years. Mr. Pinkerton was subsequently employed by the express company on other cases, and traced the perpetrators of several robberies.

The fame of the agency became extended, and its service was widely sought. Offices were established in New York and Philadelphia, and about 125 men employed. One of Allan Pinkerton's sons, Mr. Robert A. Pinkerton, became the general superintendent, and Detective Bangs had charge of the New York office. Mr. R. J. Linden had charge of the Philadelphia office.

There is scarcely any very important case involving large amounts of money and requiring great detective skill in which the Pinkertons are not employed. When Abraham Lincoln was elected President, Allan Pinkerton was engaged to see him safely to Washington. He became convinced that there was a plot to assassinate Mr. Lincoln on his way through Baltimore. He convinced Mr. Lincoln and his immediate friends that the plot existed, and it was by his advice that Mr. Lincoln reached Washington privately by way of Harrisburg. He wrote an extended account of the trip, and denied authoritatively the story that Mr. Lincoln disguised himself in a Scotch cap and military cloak.

During the war Allan Pinkerton was employed in the delicate duties of chief of the secret service of the United States, and served under the various secretaries of war up to Burnside's resignation. He was specially employed by General McClellan, and has recorded his perilous and exciting experience in a large book called "The Spy of the Rebellion."

Pinkerton was known in the service as E. J. Allen, and many officers of the army knew him by no other name. It was he who collected the information from contrabands, prisoners of war, spies, deserters, loyal Southerners and others, that convinced General McClellan that there were 200,000 men between the Union army and Richmond. Mr. Pinkerton wrote fifteen volumes relative to his own experience and the ways of criminals. Besides the books already referred to, he wrote "Mississippi Outlaws and Detectives," "Criminal Reminiscences," "Expressmen and Detectives," "Mollie Maguires and Detectives," "Professional Thieves and Detectives," "The Spy System of the United States Army during the Late Rebellion," and other works of like character. In these books he exposed the ways of society thieves, hotel thieves, express robbers, forgers, counterfeiters, and criminals of all classes.

Mr. Pinkerton was fond of reading and study. He made it the work of his life to know all matters relating to the detection of crime. He had a theory that it is a law of nature that it is impossible for a criminal to keep a secret, and that in some way, to some one, he is sure to betray himself. He trained his men to work on this theory, and by patient and tedious work, extending over months, or years, if necessary, often unraveled the most intricate crimes.

The Pinkerton agencies were by his directions kept well supplied with disguises, and each of them is equipped with quite a theatrical wardrobe. His men are his actors, each selected for the part he is best fitted to play. Mr. Pinkerton was the father of eight children, and two of his boys have become noted in his business. Of his years he was much occupied with book-writing, but was always ready with his advice and counsel in important cases. He was a robust man, with a large head and face, rather stern in manner, stubborn and uncompromising when his mind was once made up, yet just enough to acknowledge an error when found to be in the wrong. He was proud of being a Scotchman, and ever ready to help his countrymen. Although in his sixty-fifth year, his eyes were bright and unflinching to the last, his voice clear and manly. He carried in his body two bullets received in desperate encounters with criminals.

The Yellow Mask

by Katherine Stagg

CHAPTER ONE

I HAD not seen my friend Maud in a decade, and I was prepared to find her changed, but when I got off the train and saw her standing on the platform watching out for me, it was difficult to conceal my surprise at the appalling difference that the lapse of only ten years had made in her.

It was not that I did not recognize her at a glance, for Maud was a girl who was not easily forgotten. Her girlish beauty had always made a deep impression on me, and I had wished when I first knew her that she could have gotten out of her small-town environment, could have come to New York, enjoyed a few of the advantages of city life, met the right kind of men, and then married well into a sphere where her charm and vivacity would have made her a queen.

But an early love affair while I was in far countries cut off the ambitions that I had for my friend. She had married and settled down according to the small-town talk, and I supposed from her occasional letters that she was happy.

It seemed a pity—that bright and beautiful girl—but I consoled myself that if the magic hand of love had really shaped her life, that were better than all the riches of India.

Women are incurably sentimental, and there is a perpetual warfare in every woman's heart between the glitter of lovely things to adorn her beauty and the soft spoken word that is balm to the hungry heart.

So one may imagine my astonishment to find Maud with great dark eyes that looked out of hollows of purplish shadow with a fire that betokened feverish terror; no lesser word could express it. The heavy mass of chestnut hair was almost snow-white, and yet she could not have been over thirty.

The graceful figure was straight and supple as ever, but her hands trembled and her lips quivered as she came toward me.

"Maud, you dear old thing!" I cried as we hugged and kissed; truth to tell, I was glad to hide my face for an instant on her soft shoulder.

"Ah, Kay, it seems a century since I saw you," she answered in the full rich voice I had always loved. "It is so good of you to have come; I need a friend if ever a woman did."

In a sense I was glad to have her say this, for it showed that whatever it was that had laid such a blight on the girl, she did not intend to make a secret of it.

"Why, Maud," I exclaimed, but changed to a lighter tone at once, for a great wave of pity swept over me, and some intuition told

me instantly that I must be wary, "you need a friend? Not while I am here, for I am yours to the last notch, for a whole month, if you want me."

"Indeed I do want you, Kay, and I only hope you will forgive me for drawing you into conditions that are beyond words. Come, this is my little car, and while we are driving out to my place I must give you an outline of what you will find there."

"So you live out of town?"

"Yes, we moved about a year ago. My husband has a sort of roadhouse called 'The Laurel Glen Rest.' It is a lovely spot, and I hoped when we moved there it was going to be a paradise, but it is a hell on earth!" she ended explosively.

"What can you mean, Maud?" I cried in astonishment.

"That is part of the trouble, for I don't half know myself, but every night at nine o'clock I am locked in my rooms in one corner of the house, and I am not allowed to leave them until morning. All night long I hear things—queer things, groans, screams sometimes, long silences that seem even worse, and he, my husband, will tell me nothing. Oh, I know I am a selfish thing to have brought you into this, especially as he does not know yet that I am expecting a friend. But you are the only one I could possibly call on, and you were always so strong-minded that I just had to send to you."

This was something of a poser, but I have a natural bent for adventure, and I rallied my faculties to meet this unexpected situation.

I looked at her sharply. Could it be that she was in a way unbalanced? That seemed the most reasonable explanation of her wild words.

"But, my dear girl, here you are in the open road as free as air; could you not appeal to neighbors or local friends?"

"No, that is impossible; I really have no one. I still love my husband. John Fleming is all that I hold dear in this world besides yourself. You know my people are all dead, and I have waited for you to help me, for I would rather die a hundred times over than have any harm come to John. So that is why I cannot call in any one local; don't you see?"

It sounded very strange, and I could make nothing of it.

"Are you alone there with your husband?" I asked.

"No, we have a Jap boy named Kito, who does all the work. He is the most efficient creature I ever saw, but he speaks only a few words of English, and my husband's uncle, Anson Fleming, is staying with us."

"Your husband's uncle? Then why don't you appeal to him?"

"He is an invalid, and never leaves his room; I—I have not even seen him for weeks; John carries the key to his suite and tells me he needs absolute quiet, but he, too, must hear the things that I hear and that are driving me nearly wild."

"An invalid! Does he have a doctor?"

"There is a Doctor Norris, who comes out once a week in his car from the city, but I am not allowed to see him."

Each statement that she made added an element of queerness to the story, and I felt more than puzzled. I am a very practical person, and not an alarmist. But one will admit it was a most puzzling position to find one's self in, and I made a quick decision.

"My dear girl, you surely seem to be in trouble, but I hope it is more than half imagination. Now, look here. What kind of a welcome do you suppose I will find if all these complications exist?"

"I absolutely don't know, but, Kay, don't desert me, will you?"

"No, you need have no fear of that, but before we find ourselves in the toils of this situation I must insist on just one thing. I want to send a telegram, so if we should need any help there will be a lifeline out, so to speak. Is there any place from which I can wire before we reach your house?"

"Yes, by making a short detour we can stop in the nearest village, off to the left there."

"All right; drive that way as quickly as you can."

I had noticed that her driving was careless, to say the least, but we had been going over lonely roads, and I had not minded.

In ten minutes I had sent a night letter to Detective Johnny Lewis, an old associate of mine, giving him a few words of explanation and asking him to come up at once.

This may have seemed premature on my part, but it was lucky that I did it. Johnny

Lewis with his innocent boy's blue eyes and slight figure could always get the confidence of the most wary, and his keen mind could be depended on to get to the root of most things. He was a born virtuoso of crime with the look of a good-natured lad, just the chap to help me in this tangle, whatever its nature might be. And I feared it was indeed serious from what Maud had said. The combination of locking her in her rooms at night, unholy sounds, a Jap keeper, as it seemed, and the riddle of a supposed invalid who kept out of sight. All this combined with Maud's whitened hair and frightened eyes made a most sinister equation.

What was the nature of the mystery? That was the "X" to be discovered.

CHAPTER TWO

"WHERE in thunder is Johnny Lewis?" Clancy's big voice bellowed impatiently.

"Ain't come down yet; way past his time, an' a tur'ble bunch o' mail waitin' fer him," answered Sadie, the clerk-of-all-work in the offices of Hyde & Clancy, private detectives, in West 39th street, New York City.

Clancy had been a valuable man at headquarters for many years, but a political shake-up had caused him to be demoted to his great chagrin, and he had resigned to start a private concern of his own. This had prospered exceedingly, as he still kept up his many connections with the Metropolitan police force in a quiet way. It was often said that he knew more of the underworld than any other man in the city, but he was impatient by nature, and the necessary wire-pulling of politics went against the grain.

Rough-and-ready was his slogan. Hyde, his partner, had been a criminal lawyer, and had joined his technical knowledge to the practical wisdom of Clancy. So they made a formidable pair to handle their business, and were more feared by crooks than the whole of the regular police.

Johnny Lewis had been with them several years, and, while lacking their ripeness of experience and judgment, he had a personality that was a great asset in outside work.

"Call Lewis's Hotel and make it snappy; the boy's gettin' soft. It's ten and after now," rumbled Clancy to the waiting Sadie, whose black bobbed hair and alert dark eyes were in piquant contrast to the spring finery she flaunted so airily. A clever girl, one knew that at a glance, but it was easy to guess that no one but a clever girl could hold a job in this office. Sadie was ambitious, and spent her time in taking mental notes and learning to hold her tongue, as she had confided to her best friend the night before when he had tried to quiz her about some of the business secrets of the detective firm.

Before she had gotten the number of Johnny's house a boy came in with a message for Clancy.

He tore open the envelope hastily, swung his big leg over the swivel chair, and read the letter.

"I'll be hanged! Lewis is off on some wild-goose chase. Says not to expect him for a couple of days; important. The durn little cuss, he'd better let his boss decide the importance of things, or he'll get fired. Gone out of town! 'N this damned burg just busting with nice, juicy crimes waiting for us to pick up the coin by landing a few of the experts in jail."

"It must be one of your own cases, sir. Mr. Lewis wouldn't go away else, I don't think," ventured Sadie.

"'You don't think', eh? You ain't paid to think, kid. Get Mac and we'll have to plough through this mail."

Sadie called old MacDonald—tall, lean and of few words, a canny Scotchman, faithful as a dog, and chiefly valuable for the exact literalness of his obedience to all and any instructions.

"How is the Wilmot case coming, Mac?" growled Clancy, chewing on his cigar.

"Mr. Lewis has it in charge, sir," answered Mac.

"Then I suppose it must wait for his lordship's return. By the way, Mac, got any idea where Lewis went?" growled the big voice as he ripped open letter after letter.

"Not exactly, sir; only he got a night letter about ten last night from some place upstate. Him and me was going over the papers in the Struthers divorce case at the time, but he threw them in the desk in a great hurry, and

was off before I could ask for instructions. He seemed kind of upset, sir." This was a long speech for Mac, and Clancy looked keenly at him.

"Private business of his own?"

"Couldn't say, sir."

"Even detectives have been known to have love affairs, eh, Mac?" The sarcasm was heavy and quite passed over old Mac,

"I suppose that might occur," he admitted.

"Hang it, Mac, haven't you got any red blood in your old carcass? Johnny is, I reckon, at some girl's fireside. He is young, and you can't blame him, but I wish he wouldn't leave us in the lurch when the town is sick with what friend Hyde calls a 'crime complex,' whatever the devil that is."

"Mr. Lewis intimated that it was business that took him away, sir, and said he would phone in some time to-day."

"Then why the deuce didn't you say so before? Now, what about this new case of Saunders and his ten trucks of bonded Cedar Brook whisky that disappeared from the docks just as easy as if it had been a baby's go-cart?"

"We haven't found a trace of them yet, sir."

"I bet the police could give you a hint, eh, Mac?"

"Very likely, sir; I could find it in myself to wish I had a few bottles of it; I always favored Cedar Brook; it is most satisfactory stuff, sir."

"Gerry, Mac, are you all out of hock again?"

"Very nearly, sir, and the pains in my neck make it quite necessary for me to have a small quantity from time to time."

"Sure you need it. Let's get concentrated on that case; I need a new supply myself; the police ain't entitled to all the best arrests, are they, Mac?"

"No, indeed, sir. What you say if I take a turn through some of those warehouses and garages on 107th street? I got kind of a hunch that might be the hiding-place; it's a wicked block, sir."

"Go to it, Mac! Take a half dozen fellows up with you, and see if you can come to a peaceable compromise, understand?"

"Just so; I'll do that, Mr. Clancy."

"Cedar Brook! Oh, laddie, the good old name!"

CHAPTER THREE

AFTER I had sent the night letter I felt better and settled down to really enjoy the drive; it was a beautiful day, the sky a deep translucent blue; in the west were great banners of color streaming up towards the zenith, fan-shaped and gorgeous against the glossy green of the laurel that banked and lined the leafy avenue of the road; a brawling brook kept us company until the hills became higher as we climbed in the staunch little car, and the rocks peeped out here and there through the tangled wild growth; a lovely country, but very lonely to my city-bred eyes.

At last we reached the house, and I noted at once that there was not another building in sight, although it was not more than a mile from the Franklin turnpike, that fine ribbon of roadway so popular with motorists. A handy place for a roadhouse, and I wondered just what was the nature of its clientele. Or was the roadhouse only a blind for some more sinister line of business? Surely, hidden as it was in its great tall trees, it would have to be known, or it might stay secretly behind its hedges.

I did not see Mr. Fleming until dinner was served, and I was agreeably surprised to find my host a fine-looking man in his early thirties, well-bronzed from the open, but unmistakably a gentleman; I could not make up my mind about him with the quick judgment I usually render; his eyes were keen, intelligent and kindly enough, but there was something stern and veiled about his glance that could be very forbidding, I felt certain.

The table was well-appointed, and the dinner both well-cooked and well-served. Kito, the Jap, officiated in that quick and silent manner of his race; I was also surprised to find a cocktail at each place, and they had been mixed by a hand that was far from being that of a novice.

Maud had evidently explained my being there, and Mr. Fleming treated me with courtesy, whatever his secret feelings may have

been; yet I caught him studying me very coolly and without any attempt at pretence several times during the meal.

A cordial was also served after the dinner, after which he excused himself, and Maud and I went up to her rooms, which I found pretty and comfortable; somehow it was all too smooth; it seemed too perfect, and I noticed that Maud was getting more and more nervous as she watched the clock.

Following a line of conduct I had determined upon, I made the excuse that I was tired from my journey, and bade Maud good-night a little before nine o'clock; she seemed relieved at this, and went with me to my room, which was on the same floor as her own.

It was a spacious and charming room, equipped with every comfort and scrupulously clean, although my visit must have been unlooked for, if Maud had told me the truth when she said she had not advised either her husband or the Jap boy of expecting me.

I am very quick in my movements, so it did not take five minutes for me to change my street clothes for a dark house gown and felt slippers that I fortunately had in my small bag.

Putting matches in my pocket and a small bunch of keys that I always carry, you will have guessed by this time that I am sometimes a professional friend of Johnny Lewis and have had occasion more than once to work with him on some mystery that he had unraveled to my amazement, for I am only a tyro, but I know a few fundamental precautions that seldom fail; so when one starts on an unknown trail matches and keys are always a safe bet; the keys I had carefully wrapped in a handkerchief, so in a trice I was ready and carefully opened my door, slipped through into the dark hall, then I fairly flew up the stairs to the story above, which was in total darkness; I was just in time, too, for the Jap came noiselessly along the hall, and without the slightest sound turned the key in the door of the room that I had just vacated.

So I was to have been locked in, as well as Maud!

I waited a long time in the darkness of the silent hallway; by and by I again saw the Jap pass along below me, but this time bearing a tray of food; he disappeared around a corner toward the other end of the house, and I supposed it was the belated supper of the invisible Uncle Anson, who had not been referred to in any way while we were having our own evening meal.

By and by I grew bolder, and felt my way along the walls until I came to a door; this I cautiously tried and found locked, but a moment's manipulation made it yield, and I entered.

Just what I expected to find I do not know, but what I did find was only an inside door of steel that was as immovable as the proverbial rock; this was getting interesting. What in the name of all that was queer could there be in this mysterious room?

CHAPTER FOUR

I WAS again creeping carefully downstairs when I heard the sound of an arriving motor and the ripple of gay young voices calling out in eager greeting; it came in such a surprising way that I suddenly felt very foolish; suppose a man did have a steel-lined storeroom, that might not be strange in this lonely spot, and perhaps Maud had only given way to nervous fears that her husband humored. This explanation seemed possible; still, why had they locked my own door?

Presently I heard the sound of tinkling china, and I crept down another step or two until I could see Kito going to and fro with teacups, and a Victrola began to play some of the latest jazz; it was all innocuous as the usual motor party, and I could not hear or see anything that would be the least suspicious; there was evidently no liquor in the cups, for I heard a laughing question or two if anything with a kick could be had, but Kito only acted as if he did not understand, and kept repeating: "Tea; him good tea, plenty such," in broken English.

Half an hour or so and they rode away; of course I knew that sort of thing would be liable to happen, as it was a roadhouse with a sign over the gateway, but I imagined the patrons of an innocent character must be few and far between.

I had found another doorway, in front of

which heavy curtains were hung, and I hid behind these when I at last heard sounds as if the house were being closed for the night.

I had begun to feel a great sense of sleepiness, which is most unusual with me when I am in the midst of any situation like the one I am giving an account of—a poor enough tale it is, for action is more in my line than narrating the course of any happening, but I want to get this story down so I can study it in future and decide for myself if I could have prevented any of the tragic events of that night.

I had not heard a sound from Maud's room; the lights were out according to the dark transom, and I was about to return to my own room and tumble into bed, hoping the next morning would show that all my fears were groundless, when I saw a very large man coming stealthily along the hall below me; I was wide awake again in an instant; this was not Mr. Fleming, neither was it Kito.

He strode quickly, though silently, down the stairs, and I saw that he was in overcoat and with a cap on his head.

Could this be the supposed invalid? A very husky person and with a powerful presence that boded ill as an unexpected factor in the puzzle of this strange house.

He was joined in the lower hall by Fleming; the two held a whispered conference and then left by the main door, which Kito closed behind them; the Jap then lowered all the lights, and I sensed that any more motoring parties would be neither welcome nor admitted for that night.

In a few minutes I heard the hum of a car that passed down the driveway; Kito ascended to the upper story as I pressed myself as near to nothing as I very well could behind the curtained doorway, and soon the house was as still as a grave.

Again fighting a growing drowsiness, I felt my way down to Maud's room; I would see if she were asleep and then give in to my weariness. A timid knock brought no answer, and I had recourse to my convenient bunch of keys.

On entering I found Maud lying full length on a couch, fully dressed; she did not respond to my whispered words or even when I shook her; then it dawned on me that she was drugged and utterly dead to the world; shutting her door, I turned on a small night light, lifted an eyelid, saw the pin-point pupil of the eye, and knew for a fact. Dope must have been administered, probably in the cordial that we had drunk after our dinner.

Fortunately I am not easily influenced by any drug, and they may have made my own dose small, not knowing this peculiarity of mine, but the poor girl lying there was as dead to all sensation as it is possible for a human to be and yet live.

One thing I was going to make sure of at once; so, covering up her rigid body, I turned out her light and made my way to the corner where the room of the supposed Uncle Anson was situated; as I expected, it was empty; a wheel chair standing by a window and the place in some disorder.

I was very strongly tempted to call up long-distance from the telephone booth I saw in a corner of the room; of a surety I felt Johnny Lewis would come as soon as he could after getting my night letter, but oh, how I wished I could hear his cheery voice over the wire, reassuring me he would be starting; yet it was too great a risk, for the Jap was still in the house, and my only play was to keep quiet and not give away that I suspected there might be foul play afoot.

So I resisted the temptation and went quietly back to my room, thinking to get a little rest; at the top of the stair I saw a bit of something that showed a lightish spot when I ventured to light a match so that I should not lose my way in this gruesome house; I was more than a little annoyed that I had been unlucky enough to have broken my pocket flash, so the more risky match had to do; picking up this object, I saw that it was a yellow mask! And it must have been dropped by the big man from the pocket of his overcoat.

It might have been two or three hours later that I was awakened by a low whistle outside; a window was raised on the floor above and an equally low answer was given; then Kito, I supposed, ran softly down the stairs and opened the front door; throwing caution to the winds, I rushed hard as I could go to a window I had spotted over the front entrance, and looked eagerly out through the heavy curtains which veiled all the windows.

Kito had two large suitcases in his hands, but the other two men carried a long something between them that my foreboding told me could be none other than a human body; whether alive or dead I knew not.

CHAPTER FIVE

GUESSING that they would probably come up to the supposed uncle's room as the most remote place in the house to relax after their night's work, I determined to get within hearing of their natural confab over their adventure, and I slid along the hall just as I heard them coming up the stairs; there was not an instant to lose, and I jumped into the phone closet and pulled the door after me, leaving it on a crack; it was a terribly risky thing to do, and I knew Lewis would say I was foolhardy, but it was my only chance, and I took it.

None too quickly either, for they came into the room with no show of caution; they supposed that both Maud and I were both safe in a drugged sleep, and they were tired with what seemed to have been a very strenuous affair, for the big man sank into a chair and mopped his head, called to Kito in a deep voice that was savage in its utter lack of human quality:

"Here, you yellow boy, get us a drink, and a good nifty snorter, too; had to do the heavy after all, didn't we, Flem?"

There was a mean sort of chuckle in his voice, and I knew at once that he was the ringleader and by far the most ruthless of the two men.

Fleming drew a long breath as he said:

"Aw, Slugger, why in hell did you hurry the job so? We might have just put him to sleep and got the stuff all right."

"Not on your life, and left him to identify my mug some day, eh? If I hadn't lost my mask, I might have chanced it, but he saw me plain as day, and so the long sleep for him."

"And for the sake of a silly idea on your part you would croak the boob; I offered you a black rag that would have done."

"Aw, cut it out; we've all got our vanity or superstition, I reckon, and I never lost a job yet when I had my yellow mask, so I'll stick to my way, son; that's the reason I like your dinky little Jap here; yellow is my color, but you needn't make any dirty puns on it, at that; cheer up, son, the shiners we got to-night will tide over many a day, and it may occur to you that playing this game of a sick uncle might be just a mite trying to a healthy man; I'm most through with this deal, so let's put little slimmy Jim's bones safely away and count up!"

The deadly coldness of the man's voice was horrible; it was plain that taking a life was all in the day's work to him.

"Friend Doc coming up to-morrow?" he continued.

"Yes; we are going to have a settlement; he has been handy as a go-between, but I don't just relish a game where so many are in the deal; we ought to make a clean-up and take it easy for a time until this little affair blows over, for there will be some rattle over the county when it is found that one of their flossy boys is missing; I tell you, this doing the gink to-night was a mistake." Fleming seemed decidedly in a bad humor.

"Cut it out, and don't be a crab, or I'll begin to think you are just a weak guy, and don't belong, see?"

"Aw! You don't know the difference between taking a fair chance for a big haul and putting yourself in wrong for the lack of a little horse sense." Both men were on edge, but Fleming was by far the more nervous of the two.

"Well, if you're going to keep up this grouch, we'll split now and here; I've been the brains of this deal right through and put in a pretty unholy time of it playing invalid, but it was a mighty slick plan, and you know it has worked like a charm."

"Oh, all right, all right; but you talk as if you can walk out and no questions asked; leave me to do any explaining, eh? I am sick of the deal, and I don't like to-night's work, but it isn't as easy as all that; you'd leave me to play a lone hand, and has it occurred to you that there is a strange woman in the house? Women are the devil for nosing into things; suppose she gets on to something?"

"Well, I didn't bring her here, did I? Gosh,

I'm about fed up with you; I'd like the sight of a skirt of me own kind, and maybe I'm going to have some gay weeks to pay up for this racket; do you get that, son? Now, we got another little bit of work to do this night, and we'd better go to it, 'stead of gassing here; come on, let's get busy."

Fleming straightened himself with a jerk of his head; his breath came in quick gasps that I could hear plainly from my hiding-place.

Kito had disappeared with the suit cases; it was evident that they had full confidence in the obedience of the Jap boy.

They made some preparations that I could not see, and were just about going to the door when the man who was called the Slugger stopped and spoke again.

"Oh, by the way, Flem, when do you expect those trucks of booze up? They will mean quite a piece of coin, too."

"Four of them were to start to-night at long-ish intervals; it is safer for them to travel at night and get here in the morning; Sweeny has that job, and he is safe, but I wish we had put it off for a week in case any one should come snooping around here to-morrow."

"To-day, you mean; it must be most morning now."

They left the room and went downstairs, picked up their bundle, which I now knew to be the body of some resident of the country-side, and went out by the back door to dispose of it.

I was torn between two impulses; I wanted to follow them, and I wanted to use that phone hanging so handily at my very elbow; I thought a moment and, woman-like, decided that I could do both by using reasonable caution.

The name of Sweeny had given me an idea.

Like many another respectable citizen, I had more or less sneaking sympathy for and with a mere boot-legger, but there had been murder here, and that is quite another story.

I guessed who this Sweeny was—the keeper of a garage on 107th street, New York City, who might lend a friendly hand in the case of good booze, but a mighty square little man in other ways; it was a cinch that he was the man, and I ventured, oh, so softly, to call up his number, which I happened to know; there was a long pause, and I feared the wire had been cut, but presently I heard a voice, and I repeated the call, and as soon as there was an answer I asked to speak to Sweeny himself if possible, gave my professional name as connected with Hyde & Clancy, and waited; I had added that I would hold the wire so that they need not ring, and presently I heard the gruff tones of old Sweeny.

"Yes, this is Kay," I whispered; "did Johnny Lewis get a car from you to-night?"

"Yeh, but he ain't started yet; went out once, but had some tire trouble just a few blocks off and put back; then it just happened that the best cars were out, and the one he wanted just come in; he'll be off in a minute." There was a pause, and I trembled for fear we had been cut off, but presently the voice resumed: "Yes, he has gone, my helper says, 'bout five minutes ago; didn't say where he was off to, but seemed in a hell of a hurry."

"Did he go alone?" I asked.

"Yes, I think so."

"Mr. Sweeny, did you send some of your trucks out to the Fleming place in Duchess County to-night; I don't want to meddle in that end of it, but I must know."

"Yeh. What of it?"

"Head them off, that's all; there's been dirty work here to-night, and you want to keep out of it with those trucks; but, listen: I'm speaking from that very house now; it's a serious and ugly piece of work; will you take one of your most powerful cars, get a couple of men from police headquarters; you can tell them just what I have said, and if you know the road well enough to follow Lewis, overtake him if you can, tell him it is a case of murder —*plus!* He will know what that means and get here as quickly as the devil will let you."

"Right-o!"

I hung up and took a long breath.

I know a lot of miscellaneous things, but on distances I am at a loose end. How many hours would it take to make that run?

I waited some time, then crept from the close closet, and found my way down to the main hall; the back door stood open, and it was an easy matter to follow the sound of voices where the two men were digging in a part of the grounds closely shadowed by a thick clump of trees.

They were reckless, or tired, or grouchy, or

perhaps had taken a drink too much; whatever the cause, they were quarreling in a violent manner and seemed to have thrown all caution to the wind; yet they worked with a hellish diligence, considering their weird job, and were soon replacing a mound of stones over the spot.

I slipped from tree to tree until I got fairly near, and I was wondering if I should be able to get back to the house without being observed after they were through with the burial, when at some word that I failed to hear the man they called Slugger turned rapidly and with the heavy shovel he had been using struck Fleming a fearful blow over the head; he went down like a sack of meal.

It was all I could do not to scream, it was so totally unexpected. Whether it came as a culmination of their quarrel or whether impatient with the rôle he had been playing, I could not determine, but the big man rolled him over with his foot, went down, and apparently made an examination; then, seemingly satisfied with his work, he gave vent to the ugliest laugh that I have ever heard; he seemed to consider putting Fleming in the same grave with the other victim, for he rolled some of the stones away; then, looking at his watch, he reconsidered the matter, gave him another careless kick, and strode to the house.

What on earth could I do alone there?

I thought of calling for help from the Jap, but I felt all too sure that he was a ready tool of the two men if not a partner, and feared that I might only put Maud's life and my own in danger, so I kept as silent as I could, while I knew my heart was beating a wild refrain.

I followed to the house; the big man did not hesitate, but went boldly up the first flight of stairs, and then, to my surprise, the second flight as well, straight to the room that I had discovered earlier in the night held the steel-lined door.

Here he fumbled a second, but produced the key from his pocket and, after a moment's struggle with the inner door, opened it and went inside; I heard the click of something, a light flashed on, then a muttered curse and a howl of rage.

We live centuries in such instants. I knew I was at the very apogee of my dangerous position, but I took the only chance that I could, swung the heavy door and locked it in a crazy frenzy with a strength that I could never have commanded save in such fearful peril.

The lock caught and the Slugger was my prisoner!"

The rest of the night I spent crocheting, seated on the stairs; this may sound very queer, but any woman will tell you that crocheting has a most sedative effect on the nerves.

Once I thought I heard sounds from the direction of the small cement garage where Maud had put her little car in the golden twilight on the day of my arrival—it seemed weeks ago—and I could hardly believe that it was only the night before, but I let the sounds go without investigation; I was at the end of my endurance, and only prayed for daylight.

It was bright sunlight when Johnny Lewis at last drove into the circling drive, and I babbled out my story of that wild night.

He took charge at once; Fleming was dead, and a good thing, too, I felt for Maud's sake; the Slugger was in handcuffs in the shortest time on record, although he put up a game fight when the steel-lined room was opened.

But the surprise of the whole affair was that the wily Jap had bolted with the biggest part of the swag in Fleming's own car. He must have been hep to the whole performance, and was waiting for the opportune time when the two men should quarrel, and he get away with the dexterity of his race.

Maud was revived, and I am sailing for Europe with her as soon as possible, hoping that other scenes will some day make her forget her terrible marriage and its tragic end.

The Slugger had had faith in the luck of the Yellow Mask, but the winner in this game wore only the Yellow Mask that Nature had given him.

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1 "The Eel Man." by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong Perry.
4 "Under the Hypnotic Spell," by Dr. H. Enton.
5 "The Silken Sheath," by Crittenden Marriott.
6 "A Fortune Teller's Secret," by Gladys Hall.
7 "The Mystic Emblem," by Marie Coolidge Rask.
8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
9 "Mr. Bachellor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by Chas. F. Oursler.
13. "Under a Mask," by Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by Chas. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by Redfield Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline C. Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29. "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith Sessions Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by Beulah Poynter.
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector J. Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieutenant Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by William Hamilton Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by C. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign on the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura Reid Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William Hamilton Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by Ethel Rosemon.
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by William H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
62 "The Velvet Touch," by Julian Darrow.
63 "The Clue of the Red Lamp," by Chas. F. Oursler.
64 "The Scheme of Solomon Snare," by W. H. Osborne.
65 "Quicker Than the Eye," by Ralph Cummins.
66 "The Clue of the Dark Room," by Hamilton Craigie.
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76 "The Spirit Witness," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
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79 "The Affair at Hollywood House," by Wm. Kofoed.
80 "A Keyless Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie.
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82 "Who Killed McNally?" by Beulah Poynter.
83 "The Clue of the Whorl," by Katherine Stagg.
84 "The 'Czar' and the Ring," by Edmund Elliot.
85 "A Clue of Flame," by Jack Bechdolt.
86 "The Face in the Crowd," by Marc Edmund Jones.
87 "The Man in Room No. 7," by Chas. F. Oursler.
88 "Four Ten-Dollar Bills," by Henry G. Howland.
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92 "Friday at Twelve," by Katherine Stagg.
93 "By the Left Hand," by Hamilton Craigie.
94 "The Melody of Death," by Jack Bechdolt.
95 "The Trick of the Great Yen How," by William Hamilton Osborne.
96 "At Moriarity's," by Fred S. Shuey.
97 "The Last Star of the Films," by Jack Bechdolt.
98 "Counterfeit Clues," by Chas. F. Oursler.
99 "The Cross," by W. S. Ingram.
100 "A Secret Service Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie and Elliot Balestier.
101 "A Crimson Price," by Elliott Lester.
102 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by Gottlieb Jacobs.
103 "A Museum Mystery," by Jack Bechdolt.
104 "The Little Red Book," by J. Alexander Young.
105 "A Man from Siam," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
106 "The Clue of the Emerald Ring," by Bulah Poynter.
107 "Hell's Hinges," by Hamilton Cragie.
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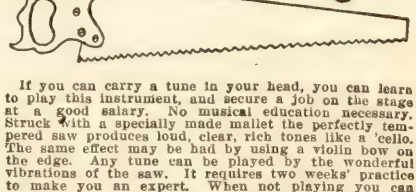

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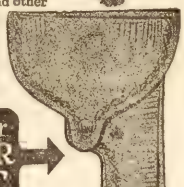

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